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Reading as a Part of the Child's Growth

WITH THIS ISSUE of *THE READING TEACHER* we begin a new editorial project which, I believe, will result in a richer, more significant group of articles for your study and enjoyment. For the past two years each issue of the magazine has included several articles dealing with various aspects of one general theme or topic. Occasionally these articles seemed to overlap simply because authors could not confer in advance.

To prevent this difficulty and to be sure of presenting a better integrated group of articles, we have invited a guest editor to plan this section of each issue of *THE READING TEACHER*. In the present issue, Dr. LaVerne Strong, Director of Elementary Education for the Connecticut State Department of Education, has served as Guest Editor of the section dealing with "Reading as a Part of the Child's Growth." The five articles in this section were prepared by educators who have worked together before and who are so located geographically that they could confer frequently on the preparation of this material. To Dr. Strong, who headed up this project, and to the four team-mates who assisted her we are indebted for the first five articles in this October issue of *THE READING TEACHER*.

They deal with one of the most significant areas in the teaching of reading, for unless we are constantly aware of the way a child is growing and de-

veloping, our teaching of reading may become rigid and ineffective. For children vary from one to the other, bringing to school a variety of experiences and attitudes. "Here They Come!" announces Dr. Strong in the title of her keynote article in which she urges us to observe the parade of varied personalities and abilities filing into the same classroom and grade.

Thus our attention is focused on the child's growth and development in this issue. It is a fitting introduction to the feature material being prepared for the December issue of *THE READING TEACHER*. "Meeting the Needs of the Individual Child in the Teaching of Reading" is the topic around which Dr. David Russell of the University of California is assembling a series of articles for that issue.

In the third issue of the year, the feature section will deal with the topic of "Reading and the Exceptional Child" to be guest-edited by Dr. Paul Witty of Northwestern University. In the final issue of the year articles on "Parents and the Reading Program" will be presented under the guest editorship of Dr. Daisy Jones of the Richmond, Indiana, Public Schools.

Thus have the plans for *THE READING TEACHER* been worked out for the coming year. We hope that the resulting issues will prove both practical and provocative.

Nancy Larrick, Editor

Here They Come!

by LaVerne Strong

Curriculum Consultant

Connecticut State Department of Education

THEY TROOP IN, eager to seize a seat next to a best friend. A little self-conscious, painfully clean in new back-to-school clothes, they are inclined to giggle and certainly to wriggle. Assorted sizes and shapes—yes, all the individual differences are here. Differences inside as well as outside and along with him, each brings his own peculiar past, unique present, and unknown future.

Each has his own definite personality. Psychologists have pretty well agreed that enduring attitudes and behavior patterns are established in early childhood. Mary Langmuir Fisher¹ opens up areas for investigation of individual children when she tells us that personality development grows out of the child's interacting with the factors and forces of his social environment in the home, in the neighborhood, and in the school. Through experience, children learn "I am safe if — — —". Some have learned that the best way to be safe is to conform, to be docile, to be passive, to do "as I am told." Others have been rejected and "safeness" for them means to withdraw, to hold back, to let no one come close enough to hurt them. There are those who feel safety can only be achieved if they attempt to be the best and to

surpass all others. At times, this being best may take, what seems to adults, alarming outlets. The boy who is always fighting may be the best in picking fights; the boy who is always bopping someone may be the best at getting attention. You will know and recognize other "I am safe-ers" as they stare at you bright-eyed throughout this school year.

Why are these children here this first day of school? They come to grow and to learn. They will learn many things but much of that learning will not come from textbooks or planned learning experiences. They will learn favorable or unfavorable attitudes toward reading. Some will meet with stimulating success and will turn to reading naturally and happily as a needed resource for many purposes. Others will learn that it is full of pitfalls and dangers; it is easier (safer?) not to try than to try and always be wrong. Some may learn that reading is mostly dull drill on long lists of words; others may learn that reading is laborious pronouncing of one word after another. Some will learn that reading is a magic carpet that transports one into exciting new worlds peopled with heroes, giants, fairies and which is filled with adventure and pleasure. Some will learn that reading unlocks all that needed information about electricity, magnets, model airplanes, cooking, and crafts.

1. Fisher, Mary Langmuir. Address given at Connecticut State Association of Elementary Principals' Annual Conference, May, 1953.

Why and how do they learn all this? Perhaps the answers can be found in that course on Child Growth and Development we took in summer school. Remember all those basic principles of growth and learning that we listed in the final exam? We dare not forget them for they will be in full operation in our classrooms every day of this school year:

Children have had many full, rich, and satisfying learning experiences over the summer; sometimes the most vital learning goes on outside the school.

Each is a unique individual like unto no other; his behavior is largely determined by the kind of social and emotional experiences he has with his parents, his peers, and yes, his teachers, too.

How much and how well he learns in school will be to a large degree dependent upon his teacher's specific knowledges of his abilities, his interests, his problems, his strengths, and his weaknesses.

Each must be accepted at his own learning level; he cannot learn where the teacher thinks he should be or where his mother wants him to be.

Each has his own learning rate and it will be marked by variability; at times, it may be steady and continuous, it may reach a plateau, it may take a spurt; children have their own timetables for the various developmental periods; to push often results in confusion and misunderstandings; to hold back induces boredom, poor work habits and possibly finding all the wrong things to do.

Growth is continuous; one learning forms associations with others to form

new concepts; learning does not proceed in fragmentary parts or isolated bits; each lesson is a part of all other lessons, those of today and yesterday.

Real learning is based on understanding; the depth of understanding and degree of real comprehension will influence the amount of retention.

Learning is best achieved when it is geared into the developmental tasks of the various maturity levels; it can be stimulated; it can be deterred; but it cannot be forced; when it is not meaningful, intensive drill and long practice may result in rote memorization which will be forgotten by tomorrow.

Readiness for learning is a part of the whole process of growth; it is not a red light which signals, "now it is time for learning"; much learning has preceded it, much will take place during readiness and much more should follow.

Readiness is the beginning of a cycle of growth and so is important in all areas at all levels of growth and development—even unto you and to me.

A child grows into reading; his reading is affected by his over-all maturities or immaturities and, in turn, they are affected by his success or non-success in reading.

A child grows best in reading in an environment that is physically, socially and emotionally rich and stimulating; an environment that constantly suggests that reading is a desirable and needed achievement; an environment that is built both by school and home; reading does not grow without nurture.

Reading is in itself a complex proc-

ess that is affected by many and diverse factors; it cannot be divorced from the child's total personality structure, from his total environment—from his living experiences in school, at home, in the neighborhood and further abroad, his anxieties and values.

To summarize some things we know about children: The total self learns to read and learning to read is affected by: how he feels physically, how he gets along with others and their acceptance of him, degree of intensity of interest, strength of purpose, his abilities, his reaction to the richness or lack of it in his environment, the traits and characteristics he has formed, the work habits he has established.

Looking Ahead

A big job to teach school? to teach reading? Those who say that it must be dull and humdrum should try it. Never are two days alike and each of them is a stimulating challenge. In itself, teaching is a creative art for it means essentially helping to mold human personalities. Whether we will it or no, or whether we consciously attempt to do so, we leave with each of the unique personalities entrusted to us a little of our own standards, our values, our appreciations and our ideals. No greater compliment can be paid than to have it said, "These children are the better for having lived this year with this teacher."

School is a learning situation for teachers, too. To stimulate that learning and to increase our insight and understanding, let's turn now to articles designed to give us practical

help. Let's review and refresh our background of what makes children tick by reading, "It's Different—for Each One" by Christine Hugerth; let's learn how to study children in "We Need to Learn From and About Children and Youth" by Franklin Lindquist; let's see our role in "Personality Development through Reading" by Elva Knight; and last of all let's visit a sixth grade with Claire Eddy as she looks at "... Personality Through Reading."

What does all of this mean? We hope that it means—a *happy new school year to you!*

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It's Different —For Each One

by Christine Hugerth

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YOU PROBABLY remember the story of the boy who, on his first day of school, reappeared at home quite a bit before school dismissal time. Puzzled, his mother asked, "Why are you home so early?" The boy, also puzzled, explained, "I can't read, and I can't write, and she won't let me talk, and so I came home."

Of course, with some persuasion, this boy was induced to give school another chance. Each day he brought along to school with him a truly staggering number of possessions. Some of these his teacher approved of and gave him recognition for immediately; others she frowned on and wished he could leave at home; yet others she never saw at all clearly, though she vaguely sensed their presence and occasionally wished she knew what they were and why they seemed so important to this little boy.

Now what did the boy bring to school? He brought his Aunt Clara, who on every visit asked, "And how is our young man doing with his reading?" Also Grandma who, when he turned up late, dirty, and tired for supper, smiled understandingly and in broken English told stories of her European childhood. He brought his mother, who let him swap comic books as long as he kept them in a neat pile under his bed and who made it quite clear that he must learn to read right away so he could "go to

college." His father came, too, who at family gatherings reminisced gleefully about playing hooky when he went to school. He always managed to get his older brother to write his "excuse" for him and no one ever seemed to catch on. This little boy brought his Uncle Joe, whom he loved and admired, who was a wizard with a camera, and who said "ain't" and "I seen." And always there was his Cousin Alex, who was so smart in school that it was no use trying to compete with him in any way but by being as different as he knew how.

And he brought himself, a boy with growing consciousness of his selfhood and uniqueness. There was his body with heart and head, energy and fatigue point. There was his curiosity about living things, about machinery, about what makes water wet and matches light. There was his desire to be liked and to be a success. And there were his own very personal memories and perplexities about the numberless events of his whole life up to the first day of school.

Each One Is Unique

Every teacher who starts with this job of teaching reading, or who gets the children somewhere in the midst of the process of learning to use the printed word, has had to work with dozens of unique little specimens like our boy of the story. Every teacher

has tried valiantly to "bring them up to grade level," has tried to "meet individual needs." She has known children for whom the circus story is real and understandable because they have seen a circus and its wonders. She has known children who sulked or "acted up" or were strangely silent when discussion turned to home life or work our fathers do, because growing numbers of children live in furnished rooms or trailers and an occasional child's father is dead or in jail. She has known children who have a story read to them almost every night before bedtime; she has known children who have no books at home and see little evidence in daily life of the need to read. She has known highly verbal children who could talk knowingly about a country's natural resources and who would reveal, if she could take the time to explore further, that they included "steel" in this concept.

Some children take to school as birds to flight, because they are well and happy, because they feel all is right in their worlds. Some children cannot settle down with any one job, because they have never had a chance to satisfy their initial curiosity about many things around them. Others settle down silently to work, conforming on the surface to school demands but dreaming and seething inwardly until dismissal hour comes. Another doodles idly, pesters neighbors, stares into space "for no reason at all"—for no reason we know, that is. We cannot expect all these children to sit equally quiet and attentive in their reading groups.

The children differ in the kinds of

lives they've led. They differ in their attitudes toward accepted middle-class values. They differ in the amounts and accuracy of information they possess. They differ in their reactions to adult authority and in their ways of buckling down to the job at hand. Consider two children who both seem to be business-like, hard-working students. One, from a privileged home where he is sure he is loved and valued, wants to read well, because this is something his parents want for him and so he wants it for himself. The other also is from an apparently privileged home, but one where he is annoying and an unwelcome encumbrance to his parents. He wants to read and to do well in school, because in his heart he knows that it is hopeless to ask anyone for love; only by sheer attainment can he win toleration from people close to him. If these two children's needs are the teacher's concern, a slackening of effort by both children will obviously mean vastly different things in each one's development. With one child it might be a danger signal; with the other a good sign.

Children differ in other ways, too. Some are in excellent physical condition and highly motivated for scholastic attainment, can work long and concentratedly on a task once their interest is aroused and once they understand what they are working toward. Others may be chronically tired, unhappy, hyperactive, or truly not interested in the task, and these children have done, what is for them, a superb job if they stick at their work for a fraction of the time the first group is able to stay with it. The

teacher is apt to know these things about the children, yet he may feel pushed to get each child, regardless of his needs or problems, to at least some kind of uniform minimum level.

Respecting Individual Differences

There has been general acceptance of the doctrine of individual differences in growth and development among children. We use our knowledge of differences in order to plan programs of instruction so that the children, in spite of these differences, may come as near as possible to a so-called standard minimum for their grade. We have not yet so generally respected these differences to the point of deliberately allowing them to increase in socially acceptable ways. The child, who reads slowly and gets details, is praised if he works to speed up his reading. The child who reads rapidly and widely and gets the basic ideas but does not retain details, must slow down.

Is it always so desirable to concentrate on leveling them off in this way? Instead of pressure to bring about uniformity of performance in a given situation, is it not better to have each work on the particular skill that he needs? Could their differing skills be put to good use in a group? Don't children have different needs, from child to child and from time to time, with respect to reading as they do in all other areas of life? Sometimes they read for the thrill of the story as a whole. Sometimes they read slowly and carefully the directions for craft work or cooking, going back again and again as they work for a detail that is vital at a given moment.

Sometimes they read to draw a conclusion from a set of facts and need to remember the conclusion instead of the facts. "The good reader" may be shorthand for "the many kinds of good readers."

Some children need reading skill more than others; some need one kind of skill more than they need another; but each will need help and guidance in terms of his individual needs.

Reading, long continued and following personal interests, leads inescapably to diversity among children, not to conformity. Are we sometimes trying to make reading the great leveller instead of the great individualizer—for children especially?

Even if all read the same things, will they think alike, act alike, write the same test answers? Will all sixth graders have the same neat package of facts and feelings about South Africa after going through the same sixth-grade reading materials? They read, "The Negro is fighting for equality." One child has never known a black person personally. Another has ideas of brotherly love from home teaching. Another has been taught that it is bad luck to pass a Negro on the same side of the street. Another is, himself, black of skin. These children all read the same words in the book. Do they all come out with the same "facts?" Must all children accept completely what this book says? Or, is one of the basic goals of reading to cause children to wonder, to question?

The Yardstick We Use

The teacher is pressed by the school administration, which is in turn usu-

ally pressed by the citizenry, to get the children through the reading texts for the year. They must all learn to read, and they must progress a stated amount each year. The mastery of a given number of pages in textbook or workbook is not, of itself, good or bad. Certainly, it is not an accomplishment to be pushed to the exclusion of other values. And yet the reading attainment yardstick is still widely used to measure fitness to move to the next grade level. Teachers must often fight out of all proportion to justify a child's promotion on the basis of any other criteria of growth. The term "promotion" is in itself in conflict with the accepted principle of continuous growth. This whole problem with its often unhappy and sometimes disastrous aftermaths might be constructively handled if teachers could "assign" children to the grade placement which would be best for their growth in terms of their total needs.

Teachers know uniformity is impossible, know it thoroughly and in a deeply felt way. But they feel the pressure of too general expectation that they can succeed at an impossible job. Hence, some begin to feel that any means, good or bad for the individual child, which gets that child through the prescribed books, may be preferable to being labeled a poor teacher. So, caught in this way, a sensitive teacher tends to feel guilty no matter which way he turns. Slowing up on reading, in order to meet children's needs in other ways, will earn the censure of the community and school officials. Pushing the children at the expense of their healthy rounded development or sound founda-

tion will earn the censure of the teacher's own conscience for having basically failed the children themselves. For example, most teachers know that a keen delight in talking, a fluency with the spoken word which is appropriate to the child's level of experience, a love of stories read to him,—all are necessary groundwork for dealing with the printed word at all grade levels. Yet how many teachers short-circuit classroom conversation, insist on cessation of talk during most of the day, give up reading aloud to children because there "isn't time."

The Pressures We Face

Above and beyond the individual children in any classroom with their different levels and kinds of maturity and attainment, their different attitudes and social adjustments, there hovers like a ghost the nebulous influence of cultural pressures on teacher and children. Children want to be grown-ups, to succeed, to learn the social and intellectual skills which will assure them a place in their group. Even a child who seems most twisted and abnormal on the surface is trying to satisfy those needs; he is simply bogged down in ineffectual ways of doing what he so much wants to do.

However, there are pressures in our society both "to read" and "not to read." In a vague way parents and teachers alike accept the idea that reading is a good thing. They do not so generally agree on "good-for-what." Parents and teachers alike have conflicting values which emotionally color their thinking and pro-

duce illogical conclusions. One value says we must all be literate; we must all make our marks in the world. But at the same time, we value highly the self-made man who left school in the fourth grade and whose entertainment less and less includes relaxation with a book. To be intellectual is to be admired; but the intellectual is often rated as a dangerous fellow with dangerous ideas. Critical, discriminating reading is a goal; but the person, who after such reading and careful study, then espouses unpopular ideas is considered odd, a crackpot.

Help From the Reading Specialist

The teacher, who is trying to give children that from which they can truly profit, needs and welcomes the support of the experts, the specialists. What can the specialists do for this teacher? First, they can recognize their own authority and consequent responsibility. The reading specialist is working in an area of school curriculum which has traditionally been considered one of the primary areas of the school's concern. Therefore, the reading specialist enjoys a prestige and power perhaps greater than that of any other specialist in our schools. He will have to be alert to the consequences of even inadvertent pressures on teachers "to move the group along." He will need to give loud and clear support to the idea of gearing reading programs to individual differences and needs. The public needs to know that reading experts care about children's all-around development; that they know that healthy, happy children learn better and faster; and that the first job is seeing

to it that children have many experiences with real things and people and processes onto which they can fasten word symbols. Vicarious experiences have their place, but all children and youth learn much better from the concrete, the "touchable," the "smellable," the "watchable."

The reading specialist can interpret to all interested people that reading will by no means teach all that children need to learn in school. People will value these statements more when they are made by reading specialists, who are known, by virtue of their field of work, to value reading most highly.

The reading specialist needs to throw his weight behind the desire of teachers everywhere to promote children with their social group, even though they may not have learned to read, especially in the first grade. Most teachers dread, and for good reason, working with the child who has been "kept back." They do not like having to give the child, in too many instances, the same old materials under conditions the child knows to be those of failure.

The reading specialist can look into the uses to which standardized reading tests are put. Are they used as a teacher rating device? Are they the single criterion on the basis of which children feel the sting of non-promotion? If so, the specialist has the best chance of anyone involved to make clear that good tests in such cases are being poorly used. He can insist that tests be used solely to understand and help children, never to "label" a child.

Above all, we all need to stop once

in a while and ponder, "Reading, yes. But reading for what?" The more the grown-ups think about this question, the more the reading program for children will be designed so that children themselves can see what it profits them to learn to read. We will be demonstrating to children that reading in itself is not necessarily a valuable thing, but it is of value according to the contribution it makes to a successful and happy life, even in the third grade. Gaining skill and simultaneously getting the notion that books are instruments of torture to be avoided at all costs outside of school seems a short-sighted waste of everyone's time. Better to wait a bit longer, better to spend less time on skill drills, better to give more time to developing interests and activities which require reading skill for their successful cultivation. Getting the best

buy on a second-hand bike requires reading of newspaper ads; making a dog house or a dress requires reading of diagrams and directions.

Children come to school thinking universally that learning to read is synonymous with growing up. They want to learn to read on that first day of school. None wants to be a reading problem. The reading specialist, who knows how children grow and develop, can help teachers to meet children's needs and prevent reading disabilities by shaping programs which suit the individual student.

Perhaps, then, the boy in our story will come home the first day of school bursting with excitement. "You know, Mom, she let one of the big kids read us a story about 'Mike Mulligan and His Steam Shovel.' When I'm big, I'll do that. Say, Mom, how long will that be?"

We Need to Learn From and About Children

by Franklin R. Lindquist

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ONLY AS WE learn from and about the children in our classrooms, will be able to plan intelligently their educational experiences. Any situation in which a child is actively engaged is a learning situation. If it is to be a valuable one for him, it must be geared to his abilities, his needs, and his interests. One of the basic jobs of a teacher is guidance, but guidance into worth-while learning activities

for each is possible only with background knowledge of each pupil. A knowledge of capacities and abilities, of past and present experiences aids in planning meaningful, functional learning.

Since reading is a part of the total growth process and may be either a contributing or deterring factor in overall personality development, it is of utmost importance, too, that a

teacher know the developmental sequences of language in all its aspects—oral, written, printed—and what relationship they bear to the developmental tasks of children and youth. To effect a developmental reading program that is in harmony with the developing, maturing abilities of boys and girls, raises teaching to the creative level.

Through college courses, in-service education, workshops, conferences, and professional literature, teachers are constantly gaining broader understanding of the operation of the principles of growth and development and the developmental sequences of a modern reading program. The almost universal question asked by teachers is, "*How do we apply this in our own classrooms?*"

There would be many "*hows*" to be discussed if one were to consider each aspect of the reading program. However, because intimate knowledge of pupils is a prerequisite to the planning of a functional reading program, attention will be centered upon those resources which help teachers gain the essential information.

Living and learning with a classroom of youngsters for a school year, the teacher has ample opportunity to learn and to evaluate the complex factors which comprise the total growth of each. What and how much she learns depends upon the individual teacher. Whether or not she consciously sets out to do so, inevitably she accumulates evidences of the degree of personality adjustment, personal problems, backgrounds of experience, home environment, peer relationships, attitudes, values, and hab-

its of work and play. Teachers can improve their fund of knowledge of children by the use of several methods and techniques which are not ordinarily employed by most of them. Therefore, to assist teachers considerable discussion will be devoted to some instruments and techniques used by child development and reading clinics which have been adapted and found valuable by classroom teachers.

The suggestion that teachers will profit from a more comprehensive study of children is not to be interpreted to mean that case studies should be prepared for each student. Such a proposal is in itself impractical. If all a teacher's time is to be spent in studying a child in detailed fashion, no time would be left for planning and doing. True, there are some children who present problems so complex that the teacher will need to gather extensive information and call to her assistance specialists and outside agencies. For the great majority of children, however, use of the suggested techniques and instruments will provide the information and clues necessary for individual and group guidance.

Working Together on Problems

Each year, most school staffs choose for study some phase of the curriculum for the purpose of improving the educational program. An in-service program of great value to all the teachers would be one in which the various methods of child study are explored, evaluated, and adapted for use in terms of local needs. Such a venture would permit teachers to share their knowledge of pupils, avoid

duplication of time and effort in getting to know those whom they teach, and provide an opportunity to allocate responsibilities for committee assignments to evolve methods and techniques. An integral part of such study would be the devising of means by which the information gathered could be recorded efficiently without undue burden on any teacher.

For example, in many schools initial group intelligence tests and measures of reading readiness are administered near the end of the kindergarten year. Each teacher gives a standardized reading test, but achievement tests are given only during grades 3, 6, 8 (or 9, dependent upon the administrative organization). Studies of children's interests, home background, and a more precise evaluation of reading abilities can be initiated. Individual and group records of reading experiences, including the titles of the books used, add valuable information. Some provision should be made, too, for some means of recording changes in aspects of the child which are of a temporary or evolving nature as: leisure time activities, work experiences, vocational ambitions, personal problems.

School Climate Affects Growth

A fuller understanding of the effect of the environment upon children's growth and development makes it imperative that both administrator and teacher provide a positive, healthful school climate. Both, in their respective relationships with children, must provide real security for children in which each feels he is a desired and respected member of

the group. Merited praise and recognition coupled with democratic ways of working together aid in releasing and stimulating ability to learn. The administrator has such responsibilities as making readily available record forms, ample teaching materials including both basal textbooks and a wide range of supplementary books and materials, a broad selection of books for leisure-time reading, and occasional released time for teachers to gather information about their children and conferring with parents. The teacher has the moral and ethical obligation to conduct her classroom with due respect for the integrity of each individual. Since children learn best when they are interested and happy, Witty's (8) report on the desirable and undesirable traits and characteristics of teachers provides a valuable guide for teacher growth.

Children and the Reading Program

The reading program must be planned so that it will make its full contribution to the development of the individual and the group as a whole. It must go far beyond the mere acquisition of skills in word perception, drill on basic sight vocabulary, and recall of details. Basic information needed to nurture reading growth and achievement include how well the intellectual capacities of the child function and what his experiences in reading have been and his emotional reaction to them. These goals are fostered in a large measure by the use of reading activities that stress getting the meaning intended by the author (5), development of the ability to

read critically and thoughtfully, and dynamic group discussions that guide pupils to an increasing understanding of human behavior.

Another concept for teachers, if they are to bring reading into its real role of communication with others, is that it is an integral part of a broad language arts curriculum. Through each of the language activities, teachers gain deeper insight into needs and rates of development. A fact, too, which needs greater consideration, is the inter-relationship of needs and abilities among all phases of the language arts. Much of these understandings are lost unless clear, concise and comprehensive records are kept.

The Cumulative Record

Most schools have established the practice of building a cumulative record folder for each child. Once having been established, the record forms and information blanks should be periodically reviewed and evaluated to see if they are serving their purpose adequately. If pupil folders are kept in the classroom rather than in a file in an office, the teacher will use them more frequently to help her study her children.

The following types of information are commonly recorded: pupil's name; date of birth; parents' names; home address and telephone number; school history, which may include age of entrance into school, names of schools attended, and history of progress through the grades; level of scholastic achievement or marks; record of attendance and tardiness; summaries of the various types of stand-

ardized tests administered; a brief record of health and physical deficiencies; participation in school activities.

Occasionally some schools keep evaluations of social and emotional development. Unfortunately, most forms provide an extremely limited space for such information and in too many instances, the information consists of disjointed phrases which have little or no meaning to those who read them.

If special studies of children who exhibit pressing problems have been made, non-confidential information should be available to the teacher. Whether she should have access to confidential information about the child and his family is determined by her ability to keep all such knowledge inviolate. Undoubtedly the great majority of teachers feel a professional obligation to do so. Great damage can be done, however, by a teacher who thoughtlessly discusses children and their problems in public places, or social gatherings.

Unfortunately, all school systems do not provide specialized services as a resource for the classroom teacher to help her meet her problems. There is a trend, however, which indicates that the value of such assistance is being recognized in the diagnosis and treatment of perplexing problems of behavior and learning difficulties by the reading consultant, school psychologist or psychological examiner, the school social worker, the guidance counselor and the speech specialist. Teachers and administrators should have greater knowledge of and form closer working relationships with the community agencies who may have

facilities to give assistance in helping to solve children's problems. Pediatricians, social case workers, and the personnel of mental health clinics (both local and state), child study or guidance clinics may have valuable resources for help.

Mursell (6) suggests that a child's cumulative folder should contain nine chief types of material:

1. His entire scholastic record.
2. Records of all physical and medical examinations.
3. If the child is able to write, it may very well contain an autobiography.
4. All material which throws as much light as possible upon the child's capacity to learn.
5. Samples of the pupil's work and records of his activities.
6. Reports of interviews and conferences with parents and pupils.
7. Reports of the doings and reactions of the pupil in natural situations.
8. Records of group achievement which show the standing of the child in the group.
9. Cumulative summaries and appraisals of all the material accumulated in the pupil's folder.

It is imperative that the cumulative record be used without prejudice to the child or to any of the teachers he has had. Through the folder, facts for guidance and planning are sought; the information is not for the purpose of forming biased judgment.

Planning for the new school year may be facilitated if time is provided at the close of the year for a study of the children who will probably comprise next year's class. A conference

with the present teacher may provide many helpful suggestions. On the basis of each child's capacities, attainments, recorded experiences, and interests, instructional materials can be tentatively selected. At the re-opening of school in the fall, the teacher is then ready to initiate review of competencies, skills and knowledges. This period of review is of great value to both children and teachers. As she watches them strive to recall and to recover the loss of the summer months, she is able to identify specific weaknesses, needs, and strengths.

Inventories Useful in Studying Children

Several authors have compiled batteries of inventories for use in reading and child development clinics. One, which consists of six forms, is the *Diagnostic Child Record*¹ by Witty, Kopel, and Coomer. Since many teachers have found some of the inventories useful, a brief description of the instruments in this battery which are the most widely used will be described briefly.

The "Pupil Report of Interests and Activities"² is in four separate parts. Part 1, the *Interest Inventory*, is preferably given early in the school year after rapport has been established be-

1. Published by the Psycho-Educational Clinic, Northwestern University, Evanston, Ill.

2. This form is designed for use with children in the middle grades and is intended as a suggested guide so that items that are deemed irrelevant or inapplicable to the pupil's experience are omitted. An *Interest Inventory for Primary Children* by Paul Witty is available in mimeograph form. See Witty and Kopel *Reading and the Educative Process*, pages 335-359, for the form appropriate for pupils of secondary school age.

tween pupils and teacher. Information is to be supplied by the child in the spirit of telling a friend about himself, rather than the taking of a test. Included in this inventory is such information as: favorite leisure time activities; hobbies and club membership; play preferences; familiarity with places of community interest (museums, parks, zoo, etc.); motion picture, radio (or television) preferences; reading habits and interests, vocational ambitions; wishes, dreams, fears; personal problems and social relationships; home and school attitudes. Good teachers appreciate the role of interest in motivating learning and employ strong interests to help provide for individual differences.

Part 2, *Children's Book List*, is a compilation of 122 favorite books of children in grades 1 through 8. These are arranged in order of difficulty. They are numbered to indicate the range of grades in which the title has proved popular. For example, Renick's "*Tommy Carries the Ball*" is numbered 3510 to indicate an interest in this story by many children in grades 3 through 5. The last two numbers serve to disguise the rating. From this record of a child's leisure reading, the teacher can determine quickly the approximate level and extent of reading. Types of books read by the pupil provide a basis for suggesting related stories or experiences that will intensify or extend present interests.

If the teacher deems it of value to study the pattern and extent of the child's play activities, Part 3 contains a detailed check list. The pupil

may quickly circle those play activities in which he has voluntarily engaged during the preceding two weeks. A fourth-grade boy reported twenty-six activities, among them, playing and watching football games, playing guns, matching things, going on trips and picnics, riding his bike. Reading was used as supplementation and enrichment, for he was reading about airplanes and sports. Librarians and the child's classmates are rich resources in aiding the teacher to find the right books for the varied interests found within a class.

The last part of this four-fold inventory is a summary and evaluation of data gathered in the preceding forms. Is amount of leisure time: ample? average? meager? Are play interests: consistent with age? mature? immature? Do reading interests need: stimulation? curbing? direction? These questions are indicative of the nature of this part of the inventory. Steps to be taken by the teacher and points to be discussed with the parents are noted after this part of the study has been completed.

To illustrate its use, a seventh-grade teacher found that one of her pupils reported that he never had read a book at home because he "didn't have time." This was no idle excuse for a glance at the schedule he outlined indicated that through the week he worked with his father after school from 3:30 to 6:30 and then from 7:00 to 9:30. Saturdays and Sundays were full work days. The teacher had observed that although he was liked by his classmates, he did not join in their games at school. A conference with his mother resulted

in his work schedule being reduced to allow him some free time. With the easing of pressure, he began to join in the play with boys his age. He now had time for reading and he asked for help in selection of books on topics of particular interest to him.

A more common problem is that of a fifth-grade girl. Like too many of our preadolescents and adolescents, she was found to be carrying a schedule that an adult could not handle. She had little time for reading or play with her friends because her out-of-school time was occupied with private lessons in music, art, dancing, and active membership in three organized community groups. The resulting relentless time-schedule and the pressures of parental ambition were believed to be contributing causes for the tensions she sometimes showed in the classroom. When her parents considered her total program, they agreed that it was too heavy, and gradually she dropped out of half of her activities.

Many teachers who are puzzled by a student's action or reaction query, "What makes him do this?" The answers are often to be found only through the examination of his 24-hour day. School is an integral part of total daily living. When a child or youth enters the classroom, he brings with him his fears, his sorrows, his worries, his weariness, his tensions, his joys, and his triumphs. Unless a teacher has access to information that describes the total situation, she actually may be wasting the pupil's time and hers by treating symptoms of behavior rather than getting at basic causes.

A Check List of Reading Skills and Abilities

Too often little more is known about a child's reading skills and abilities than what is recorded in the cumulative record as the total scores he gained on a standardized reading test. Machine scoring of tests may be efficient but a teacher loses much valuable information when she does not have the opportunity to study responses and note varying success in the different areas or sections of the test. If she does not do the scoring, she should examine the test booklet for diagnostic purposes.

Study of the test items which have wrong responses may provide much information for planning further work. Was the error a sensible mistake? Was it a wild guess? Was there real cause for confusion? Going over missed items with pupils individually may show how pupils attack problems and their work habits. A standardized test may indicate only the area of weakness. A child's score may indicate that he is low in performance in vocabulary. Individual examination and consultation help to identify and diagnose specific weaknesses, difficulties and needs in vocabulary development.

As another example of misinterpretation of test results, let me tell of a standardized reading test administered to a third-grade class. Evaluation of their performance in comprehension and vocabulary control was the purpose of the test. John's score was 3.0 in comprehension and 4.0 in vocabulary. Susan's score was 4.0 in comprehension and 3.0 in vocabulary. The

composite score of each was the same, yet their learning problems were entirely different.

Study of individual performance in the reading of books as it is required in classroom activities provides further valuable information that cannot be gained from study of the results of a standardized test. Form IV, *Evaluation of Pupil's Reading*, is a check list through which a teacher is helped to evaluate such silent reading skills as: lack of interest in materials read in class; restricted ability to note detail; incorrect or inadequate interpretation of total units; lip movements; finger pointing; improper rates of reading. In oral reading situations such performance as improper phrasing, omissions, inadequate word attack skills are made evident.

Part B of this form contains an eight-point "Reading Ability Scale" that serves to review broadly the total reading program. Some of the areas covered are: skill in the mechanics of reading; ability to grasp and assimilate rather long episodes; ability to organize large units of reading content; skill in the use of books and library facilities; tendency to read widely in many areas; ability to discriminate between good and poor books. To facilitate study of this record, the various items can be arranged and recorded under such general groupings as mechanics, basic skills in word analysis, abilities in comprehension, and attitudes toward reading. Other considerations related to grouping and leisure reading are necessary to the teacher's study if a fuller knowledge of the child's accomplishment is to be achieved.

Again, a common cry of teachers is, "When do I find the time to check each child individually in silent or oral reading?"

If a teacher really believes in the value of intimate knowledge of a pupil's habits, attack upon problems, performance and interest, she will definitely plan to work with each pupil individually. She knows that from the long range point of view she actually will be gaining time for the work will proceed at a faster rate since it is based on real and specific learning problems.

Another question may be, "What are the other children doing when I am working with one?" Durrell (2) in *Improvement of Basic Reading Abilities* offers many practical suggestions and real classroom illustrations of independent group work. How often in school do children have the opportunity to enjoy a free reading period? Yet that may be the incentive to taking a book home to finish. Individual responsibilities in reading or reading in connection with science or social studies keep the group busily occupied with worthwhile activity. It may be suggested, too, that a teacher plan to check only one or at most two pupils a day. This will help to insure having time to give thoughtful consideration to the results of each interview. Starting in September, it may be November or December before each member of her class has been individually checked. Too late? No, she has been constantly accumulating much valuable information about each child as she works with small group activities. She has been able to identify early

those who have the most acute learning problems and has cared for them first.

The results of individual check have further values than teacher planning. If a child or group know their specific learning problem, they are able to attack it with more vigor and solve it much more successfully. How many times have teachers exclaimed during college courses, "If I only knew *what* that professor wanted, I could do it!" Positive discussion of learning problems with an individual or a group focuses attention and enlists wholehearted effort. A teacher who says to a group, "I believe that one of our biggest problems is being able to find the main thought in the paragraph. Now these are some of the things we can do to help us learn . . ." not only interests but challenges the group as well.

Of inestimable value, too, is precise and detailed information available for parental conferences and interviews. The teacher who has only her impressions or unsupported opinion about a child's performance often finds herself insecure and possibly defensive in talking with parents. Discussion of specific data, which confirms the teacher's observations, aid in removing a parent's suspicion that they may be the result of personal bias.

A Cumulative Reading Record Card

For this purpose, some schools have devised a master cumulative reading record card that is a concise summary of much that is known of the pupil's status and experiences. The teacher has before her these data;

standardized reading test scores; strengths and weaknesses in the various skills and abilities; attitudes; strong interests; the reading groups to which the child was assigned; the basal reader used and his progress in it by the end of the year; titles of books read as supplementary material and as leisure time reading; and brief recommendations for the teacher who would be responsible for instruction the following year. Efforts to provide for individual differences are expedited in this manner. Too, if complete progress records are kept, "report time" is much more specific and consequently more satisfying to pupils and parents.

The Home Information Inventory

An interest inventory touches on some of the factors in the pupil's home environment, but other information needs to be secured. Sending an inventory home for parents to fill out and return has not proved satisfactory. Witty (8) has recommended that Form V, *The Home Information Report*, be used as a guide for parent-teacher conferences so that information may be gathered systematically. It can be adapted to include such data as: parents' interests and hobbies; hopes and plans for the child; parents' reading activities; reading material available to the child; number and ages of siblings; inter-family relationships; ages at which the child walked, talked, etc.

A related project presented for the teacher's consideration is group study of successful conference and interview techniques. A teacher with such skills is not only successful in ascer-

taining pertinent background information but promotes good personal and school relationships with parents. An unskilled or tactless teacher may actually promote lack of confidence in the school and strained personal relationships.

A recent publication by James L. Hymes, Jr. (3) stresses the need to learn about the home and the parents over the school year. At least once a year, a home visit should be made for certain information can be gathered in no other way. Caution should be observed that the appointment for the visit be made well in advance so that the mother may plan for it and possibly be more relaxed and receptive. Often a parent seems more secure and responsive in his own environment.

The value of parent conferences at PTA meetings is a debatable matter. The possibility of other parents overhearing the conversation tends to keep it on the superficial level. If many parents are waiting to speak with the teacher, awareness of them tends to distract the teacher's attention. The brief period of time makes possible only the statement of a few generalities and may result in misunderstanding by the parent. Under these conditions, the conference is usually a monologue by the teacher. It is also very difficult for her to be able to ask the questions at this time that will elicit the information she needs from the parents. It would seem to be a more valuable use of this part of parent-teacher meetings, if it were used to schedule individual conferences for a later date.

Many school systems are now providing released time for parent inter-

views. One purpose is for the reporting of progress in place of the traditional report card. Some schools, too, provide the released time by shortening a specific school day or days and then use some of the time so provided for afternoon appointments and some for evening appointments for working mothers or to have contact with both parents.

Other Methods for Studying Children and Youth

The anecdotal record (7), or account, is a means of attempting to record objectively a child's behavior in specific situations, both within and outside the classroom. This technique, when properly used, has proved to be particularly helpful in recording emotional and social development. Teachers, who do the best job of recording data of specific behavior are aware of the danger of using "labels" to describe behavior. Such terms as "lazy," "immature," "rude," "kind," "bright," record the teacher's reaction to the situation not the child's behavior. Instead of the label "immature," the teacher might record the facts of the situation: "Mary could not fit in last piece of puzzle, burst into tears, threw pieces on floor." Over a period of time such facts help in identifying patterns of behavior and characteristic reactions to situations.

Unless accounts of a child's behavior are recorded over an extended period of time, there is little insight gained into the child's growth. The record will include progress toward reaching specific developmental tasks as well as problems of adjustment that

he faces. Administrators need to understand the nature and use of this technique, and teachers need training in its practice and use.

Other valuable means of learning about children and youth are used by most teachers. Casual, short conversations with the pupil whenever the opportunity presents itself, informal conferences with the pupil about his progress and needs, periods of sharing and group discussions, creative writing and dramatics: all are situations in which we can stimulate and estimate the emotional and social development of members of the group. We are also sensitive to the language abilities, evidence of clear thinking, personal and social attitudes. There is opportunity within the reading program to foster a more mature development of attitudes and ideals.

Stories contained in the basal readers need to be exploited, if at all possible, for their contribution to a pupil's understanding of the main spring to human behavior—reasons for a character's behavior under the circumstances described—and ways by which we can estimate a person's character. Teachers cannot moralize, and they must not expect all children to cherish the same values. These differences serve as a real kind of training in coming to know about people. Children's literature is a rich supplement to the basal reading materials.

Ways of guiding discussions of stories for this purpose are given in the two volumes by Bullis and O'Malley. (1) These volumes were prepared for use in grades 6 to 10 to assist the normal child to "become more robust from an emotional and personality

standpoint." Once a week a story is read to the class from these volumes, and the children are guided to discuss the motives underlying the behavior inherent in the story situation. Through the discussion, pupils are led to identify comparable personal problems and release emotional tensions. This, or any similar activity, will furnish insight into the pupil's personality.

As a teacher learns in one way or another the nature of a pupil's emotional problems, she can prescribe the reading of appropriate books as therapy. A recently revised publication in this field is the annotated bibliography by Kircher (4). Titles in this compilation are grouped by grade divisions, primary through high school. Following a brief annotation, the character traits stressed in the story are listed. If problems of adjustment to personal handicaps—lameness, loss of sight, overweight—are also a focus, this fact is added. A third category included is the vocational. Bibliotherapy is not a sure way to help a child to solve his personal problems. He needs guidance and encouragement to apply the insights he gains in changing his behavior. Reading books for pleasure supplements therapy and aids the pupil in maintaining a balanced point of view.

If we are able to gather and record all that we possibly can, we will not know all there is to know about a child or a youth. Furthermore, there are times when he is not able nor ready to answer some of the teacher's questions about himself. He may not want to respond. In Hawthorne's parable, "The Minister's Black Veil,"

we are reminded that each individual wears a veil—a symbol of the inviolable sanctity of his personality—beyond which few persons, if any, may trespass. This boundary the good teacher respects.

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Personality Development Through Reading

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THIS is an invitation to you, the teacher of reading, to lay aside momentarily the common quest for a magic list of reading skills and turn to that more nebulously defined quarry, personality development through reading.

The concept that personality and reading are inter-related and interdependent is not new. As in many fields, however, classroom practice lags in the implementation of research findings. Yet teachers of the present dec-

ade seem ready to reap the benefits of research studies which began in the 1920's. Momentum has been gathering rapidly. A backward glance may bring our present challenge into clearer focus and evoke a greater impetus to still further acceptance.

A cursory survey of the findings relating both to personality and reading reveal intrinsic complexities. For example, as early as 1926, Hincks(1) observed that in remedial reading cases "although the intelligence was

normal, the behavior was peculiar—eccentric, irrational or antisocial.” Subjects in her study showed such reactions as “anxiety about health, willfulness, rudeness to elders, stubbornness, untruthfulness, boastfulness, selfishness, repression, high fatigability, and emotional outbreaks of crying and tantrums.” In 1928, Blanchard(2) listed personality characteristics relating to reading disabilities. Specifically, she noted absent-mindedness, inattention, lack of interest, laziness, seclusiveness and sensitiveness. In the 1930’s Blanchard(3), Challman(4), Gates(5) and Monroe and Backus(6) published independent studies showing marked agreement between relationships of reading disabilities and a number of personality characteristics. Anxieties, nervousness, aggression, defeatism, withdrawal, daydreaming, inattention, self-consciousness, and compensatory reactions were observed in each study. An upsurge of research in this area in the 1940’s and early 50’s(7) has shown significant increase in efforts to establish more concrete scientific evidence of cause and effect relationships between reading and personality.

Despite the fact that the research is still too young to have produced conclusive data, it is sufficient to indicate agreement in attitudes toward a definitive trend. This trend seems to point directly to the need for a child development approach to reading. It suggests that the time is imminent for making concerted efforts to implement reading programs that recognize personality factors in reading. Classroom experimentation in this direction may be expected to pay large

dividends and effect a changing attitude concerning the place of reading skills, *per se*.

Obviously, the studies cited have emphasized negative aspects of personality and reading. Nevertheless, they provide a sound background for advocating a positive hypothesis: *that desirable personality characteristics and effective reading development are inter-related and interdependent*. It is paramount that teachers give serious consideration to providing a climate of increased recognition and understanding of the personal behavior of children as a basis for increased recognition and understanding of reading. With the hope of encouraging understanding of this hypothesis and presenting a realistic approach to it, an attempt will be made to (a) suggest a few attributes of personality with implications for the teacher’s role in dealing with them, (b) indicate a basic philosophy of reading, and (c) recommend procedures through which the classroom teacher might provide a functional reading program which inter-relates developmental behavior patterns with a developmental reading program.

Personality and the Teacher of Reading

Menninger(8) has defined personality as “the *total you*.” “It includes,” he writes, “all your physical equipment—brains, bones, skin, organs, muscles, blood vessels, as well as your winning smile, roman nose, and jutting chin. In addition, personality also includes your ideas, feelings, hopes, longings, loves, hates, friendships, in-

terests. It's the way you use your body to express yourself, to transport yourself, to perceive, to feel. . . . Actually, what we call our mind and body are really one." Thorough analysis of a definition such as this could take on thesis proportions, legitimately drawing on the most advanced theories of psychology and psychiatry. For purposes here, however, it spells out the need for specific attention to background knowledge of child growth and development in respect to physical, emotional, mental, and social capacities, achievements, and aspirations. It precludes an awareness of the child as he looks, as he feels, as he behaves.

Another way of looking at the meaning of personality may be found in the psychological viewpoint that people are motivated by certain fundamental needs and that behavior is the manifestation of one's efforts to satisfy them(9). Frank(10) and Rath(11) have defined fundamental needs of children and have demonstrated various ways to meet them in educational practice. Their work suggests the wisdom of classroom teachers making every possible attempt to provide for such needs as affection; belongingness; achievement; recognition; security; freedom from fear and guilt; sharing in decisions affecting one's own welfare; integrating attitudes, beliefs and values; reconciling conflicting views arising from different groups, codes, and standards; adjusting to home problems and overloaded life schedules; health; social influences and environmental factors.

Concurrent with providing for these social and emotional needs must be provision for developing back-

ground skills, abilities or knowledge necessary to the work at hand. This should be based on purposeful goals and individual capacities(12). The degree to which the classroom teacher perceives, understands, and attempts to be constructive in regard to these fundamental needs might be used as a yardstick for determining when and where to introduce specialized reading skills, materials, and appreciations in reading. It seems safe to predict that it will determine, also, the extent to which these and associated learning experiences may be successful.

A third view of personality might be derived from studying some of the practical elements of personality adjustment. The following diagram prepared by the California Test Bureau (13) may serve as one example of this approach:

GOOD PERSONALITY—A balance between self and social adjustment

1. Self Adjustment: Based on feelings of personal security
 - A. Self-reliance
 - B. Sense of Personal Worth
 - C. Sense of Personal Freedom
 - D. Feeling of Belonging
 - E. Freedom from Withdrawing Tendencies
 - F. Freedom from Nervous Symptoms
2. Social Adjustment: Based on feelings of social security
 - A. Social Standards
 - B. Social Skills
 - C. Freedom from Anti-Social Tendencies
 - D. Family Relations
 - E. Community Relations

The intent of this suggestion is not to use it merely as an objective checklist or solely for whatever values a profile chart might have. It is recommended as one type of guide to serve as a way of looking at children to ob-

tain needed information about them. Such results need to be interpreted in the light of the teacher's greater knowledge of each child as he operates inside of school, on the playground, at home, and in the community environment. The point is *not* to label the behavior (impudent, polite, mischievous, or lazy), for labeling tends to reflect the teacher's personal reactions in terms of her own values. The important point is to attempt to determine *why* that behavior exists—whether it is positive or negative.

Systematic observation, thoughtful interpretation and skillful handling of behavior to promote and to produce positive responses may be conceived as one of the major roles of the classroom teacher. One's ability to adapt reading plans and programs, to accept varying performance, and to adjust expectation levels may play an important part in developing and strengthening personality growth.

Should the inference then be drawn that all teachers of reading should be *intensively* trained in psychology? Not necessarily, but teachers do need sufficient background for understanding principles of growth and development and developmental tasks. The psychology of behavior, child development, and human relations seem to warrant earnest consideration as the very essence of teaching—particularly the teaching of reading. Studies show that teaching success is usually judged in terms of interpersonal relationships (14). Probably in no other area of teaching do we have as much evidence of the importance of maintaining relationships that foster feelings

of security and success as we have in the field of reading.

Basic Philosophy of Reading

What basic philosophy of reading justifies the belief that the foregoing understandings about children are inherently important?

A report of the American Council on Education's Committee on Reading(15) stated in part, "Reading . . . is a form of experience which contributes to the intellectual and the emotional growth of the individual. As such, it is not an end in itself. Its general function is to work in concert with all other forms of experience in furthering the development of the reader."*

"Learning to read is a lifetime process," writes Strang(16). "It is an intrinsic part of life, not a special skill set apart from the individual's total development." She goes on to relate reading to seven stages of development: recognition and perception in infancy, preschool building of oral language arts, beginning reading in the primary grades, broadening of basic skills, development of proficiency in content areas, specializing toward a broadening and deepening of reading interests, and practical uses of reading in vocations, social relationships and enjoyment of leisure time.

This concept of reading calls for a unified functioning of the individual. Therefore, the reading program must be integrated into the total curriculum and the total experience and development of the individual. It cannot be relegated to an isolated, sched-

• Italics are those of the writer.

uled reading period with no resources other than a basic reader and/or phonics charts. It cannot be merely a skills subject based on meaningless repetitions and drills. It does not countenance routine taking-of-turns in oral reading around a circle, to be followed by underlining and filling in blanks in the next five pages of a workbook. It does not condone "covering" a book at a given time within arbitrarily set limits of a particular school year. The concept of a functional reading program does require, first of all, not only an attitude but a strong conviction on the part of the teacher that:

1. Reading readiness at all levels and reading growth are related to physiological and psychological maturation(17).

2. Reading goals need to be set in terms of personality needs and aspirations.

3. Reading is a *process* rather than a subject.

4. Reading is the "core" around which the greater part of school learning is centered.

5. Reading is both a tool and an art(18).

Relating Personality Development with Reading Development

Let us assume that the teacher of reading is willing to accept the hypothesis stated earlier in this article: "that desirable personality characteristics and effective reading development are inter-related and interdependent." The ever-practical question remains: Precisely *what* can be done about it in a classroom of thirty or forty children(19)? Perhaps the fol-

lowing four recommendations may serve as a springboard for action:

1. Get to know and understand your children without prejudice of cumulative records, negative reports from others, or feelings induced by fatigue or previous experiences.

You might wish to supplement your own observations and attitudes by

- (a) Using a test such as the California Test of Personality or Behavior Preference Record(20), not solely as a checklist or for profile ratings, but to evaluate and interpret responses in terms of your knowledge of classroom behavior.

- (b) Surveying ability and achievement test scores to identify specific needs but recognizing that in themselves, they have many limitations. Make an effort to get access to the tests themselves, look at both the part scores and the nature of the responses, particularly those which were incorrect. Were errors reasonable or far-fetched? Were the answers correct but incomplete because of the time element? How do these records reflect, coincide or disagree with what you know about his personality, or his particular problems and feelings at the time he took the test?

- (c) Seizing or making opportunities to talk informally with the child and/or his parents about things he likes to do outside of school, what he says about his playmates, whether or not he has any or too much planned or unplanned free time, etc.

2. Respect the integrity of each individual and *believe* in his basic de-

sire to succeed.

(a) Treat each child's behavior among his peers in the same manner in which you like to be treated among your colleagues.

(b) Be more concerned with *why* a child behaves as he does than with *what* that behavior is.

(c) Think more of the *reasons behind* success and failure than of the fact itself.

(d) Is there any way in which you might have helped the child to succeed when he failed? Or did you just *expect* him to succeed?

3. Teach skills and use materials that are at instructional learning levels rather than frustrational levels. Try to make them meaningful within the child's world.

(a) If the response is not what you expect, are you teaching and using materials *you* think the child should have apart from his special needs and interests?

(b) Is the work so difficult that it is creating blocks of insecurity, failure, indifference, or lack of concentration?

(c) Is there a gap between what *you* want him to learn and what he already knows or has experienced?

(d) Have you taken the time to show purpose or meaning to your expectations?

(e) Is the application of this learning too remote for the child to comprehend its value?

4. Show your own personality, breadth of interests, and recognition of individual needs by supplying a "lush" atmosphere for reading in the classroom.

(a) Use attractive, colorful

posters, charts, and pictures to stimulate curiosity and promote pride in classroom appearance. Make it a regular practice to read about and send for some of the many free materials offered by industry, travel bureaus, and educational agencies (21). Limited funds need not be a deterrent to an appealing classroom with plentiful supplementary materials.

(b) Draw on audio-visual aids such as movies, slides, and phonograph records to enrich backgrounds or reinforce learning.

(c) Help children plan and construct projects that will involve their creativity and personality.

(d) Enlist the help and facilities of school and community librarians for securing many books, of many interests and levels of readability for the library table or bookshelves. Remember to include, also, a goodly number of bibliotherapy titles (22) with which you are familiar or in whose use you can give wise guidance.

(e) Call on special talents, interests, and cultures of parents as well as the children for increasing understandings and setting up classroom exhibits.

If you are energetic enough to make full use of the preceding suggestions, your reading program will enforce visual, auditory, and kinesthetic approaches to learning. It will incorporate motivation, experiential background and its enrichment along with a recognition of needs and abilities in the classroom and community. It will be centered around meaningful, successful learning experiences,

and growing children. It will be an integral force in the lifetime process of personality development.

Summary

In summary, an attempt has been made to show how personality and reading development are inter-related and interdependent. Attention has been directed toward an effort to define and to suggest practical methods to assist the classroom teacher in recognizing and providing for a developmental program which takes cognizance of this aspect of teaching reading. This has been done by directing the reader's attention to significant research on the relationship of personality and reading disabilities, enumerating various components of personality, advancing a child development concept of reading, and recommending specific procedures for implementing an appropriate reading program. Implications for teaching have been made in respect to utilizing research findings, understanding personality factors and basic drives, suggesting areas of teacher-training, and practicing a philosophy of reading growth and development. Ultimately, however, the effectiveness of any such program rests with the personality of the teacher.

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A Sixth-Grade Teacher Looks at Personality Development Through Reading

*by Claire Frances Eddy
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Personality Development Through Reading! That is a provocative challenge to all classroom teachers. But can it be translated into classroom practice? Is it possible to take seriously the recommendations for providing a functional reading program which relates developmental behavior patterns with a developmental reading program? Is this, as many teachers declare, more "theory" propounded in the higher halls of learning in Teachers Colleges and Schools of Education for the harrassment of those who already teach, not train? Is it truly practical, or does it just seem so?

I am convinced that it is practical, and I would like to tell you why.

To dispel possible illusions or confusions: I am not a psychologist; I am not a reading specialist; I am not a

reading consultant; I am a teacher of a roomful of sixth graders with everything that implies. In addition to the language arts, my teaching schedule includes individualized instruction in meaningful arithmetic, with advancement according to measure of ability; science and social studies experiences involving whole-class, group, or individual activities, teacher-pupil planned, and based on interests and capacities; plus the many other offerings presented in modern education for today's elementary school children.

This is not a complaint. Rather it is a never-ending challenge and a daily test of resourcefulness. Classroom teachers everywhere will acknowledge the preparation and out-of-school hours which, of necessity, must go into the organization of an activity program.

Undoubtedly, as I attempt to translate theory into practice and examine my program, I will find that I am falling woefully short. But I am sure that, as I work through the areas discussed in the article, I will receive many suggestions for improving and enriching our work in the classroom. The coming year, then, will be a still better and happier one for my sixth graders and me.

What Are Sixth Graders Like?

Apparently, my first job was to find out what sixth graders are like. Yes, I had some pretty firm convictions about them from living, working, and learning with them. I did not rely, however, upon my judgment. Instead, I turned to the experts who have devoted much study to child growth and development to see if my ideas needed to be revised or would be substantiated perhaps. Too, I planned that as I read of the general abilities, interests, traits, and characteristics found to be common among preadolescents, one part of my mind would be constantly asking, "What are the implications here for planning a better program? For better teaching of reading? For better learning activities in all areas?"

One fact stood out above all. Children are different—but they are alike as well. The difference comes in the wide variability within the "alike-ness." The sequence for the teacher seems to be: first, a knowledge of general characteristics and traits; second, a study of each individual in order to know "how-why-where-when-what" he varies as an unique individual.

Strang(3) paints a vivid picture of

the problems of the preadolescent when she says his behavior "is influenced by many factors: his stage of maturity, his previous experiences, his present attitudes and bodily condition, the pulls and pushes in his immediate environment, his unique personality as it has already developed, his individual growth pattern and his self concept. Interwoven with these individual characteristics are certain common developmental trends and pervasive cultural influences." In Strang's (3) overall presentation of the preadolescent, I identify further definite guideposts for my teaching.

1. Preadolescents take themselves seriously; develop keen competitive spirit; like to work things out for themselves; prefer activities in which they can participate. (*Another value of pupil-teacher planning?*)¹

2. They want to be respected and treated as grown-ups and at the same time retain the advantages of childhood, which results in fluctuation of behavior; are likely to resist adult interference; sometimes exhibit group resistance to teacher (*Yes, they do. I've had it, have you?*) become more critical of adults; are less dependent upon praise but still benefit from it.

3. They set standards of achievement for themselves and practice specific skills they want to learn (*Why were they not interested in practicing some skills I felt they should learn? Was the purpose not clear to them? Was there no immediate application?*)

4. They have a strong sense of justice (*Is that why children like*

1. Asides in italics are from the author of this article.

teachers who they say are "fair" and play no favorites?); let their ideal help to guide their conduct; change heroes and ideals as experience widens (an opportunity to develop literature to help them understand themselves and others?) develop increasing self control.

5. They develop cooperative group spirit, class and group loyalties, interest in team; like to vote—an expression of collective feeling; feel that success in establishing themselves in groups is most important; like to make rules and regulations for themselves. (*Is this the opportunity to encourage committee work, projects, reports, setting up class standards for work and play following democratic methods?*)

6. They grow in ability to see relationships; seem to find satisfaction in such definite tasks as arithmetic in which they can see results (*Is this a clue for reading assignments, setting-up of self-determined short term goals?*); exhibit an intense interest in facts—their accurate knowledge about airplanes, automobiles, and practical science outruns that of many adults (*Cue for encouraging wide reading of both informational and recreational materials? Reading in science and social studies?*)

7. Their great hobby is making collections—more than one-half have collections. (*Good language arts experiences here? Reading? Writing? Exhibiting and telling about them?*)

8. Boys like vigorous play stunts, timed races, other activities involving competition, dexterity, skill; will practice to gain desired dexterity; like to tinker with radio, electrical and me-

chanical equipment and devices (*No, they can't sit still too long, I knew they had to be able to move around to work in different situations.*)

9. Boys' favorite subjects are usually woodworking and science (*I'd better put extra stress on those reading skills needed for science materials.*)

10. Girls are usually taller and heavier than boys; exhibit greater social maturity perhaps two years ahead of boys; girls are interested in folk dancing, realistic dramatizations, cooking, sewing, constructing and furnishing model rooms or houses (*Those interests create many reading needs—I'd better talk to the librarian.*)

11. Secondary sex characteristics appear; wide range of differences in maturity levels; uneven growth of parts of body; present extreme deviations in size and developing physical characteristics; deviate is affected keenly in his outlook and social relationships (*So! That is why the behavior of some seemed to change so radically!*)

This is what sixth graders are like in general. And, as if it were a mirror, I saw my friends therein. But to know them as individuals? The article, "We Need to Learn From and About Children" is rich in suggestions. Many we use, but many more are there for me to try this year. Through their use, I will be able to develop the increased insight and understanding necessary to plan a better overall program to fit all needs.

2. Lindquist, Franklin: "We Need to Learn From and About Children and Youth." This issue of *The Reading Teacher*.

What Is My Basic Philosophy of Reading?

In "Personality Development Through Reading"³, five points are developed to help me think through my basic concepts of reading. Let me review the highlights:

Readiness is fully as important for me to consider as it is for the first-grade teacher.

Olson(2) reminds us that, if we provide a rich environment and give children freedom to explore, their "seeking behavior" will do much to tell us the "teachable moment." None of us would recommend a "laissez-faire" attitude, nor do we start as novices with each new group of children. In fact, the more the teacher knows in general about how children develop and the natural steps children usually take in learning to read, the better able she is to study her particular children.

Reading goals should be set in terms of personality needs and aspirations.

Reading is a process rather than a subject.

Reading is the core of the curriculum and any improved reading program must consider it as an integral part of any curricular field using printed materials.

Reading is both a tool and an art.

Let's Visit My Sixth Graders

One section of Miss Knight's article³ deals with "Procedures for Inter-relating Personality Development

with Reading Development." Perhaps one proof of their practicality and worth is that I have already found that some of them work.

Try to get to know and understand each child. Before school starts, no sitting-at-my-desk or last-minute preparations before the bell rings. What better use can I make of time than greeting different children as they come in, showing how glad I am to see them, and how happy I am to be there, too? Feeling of belonging? I like the children to feel that I belong, too.

And after school? As time is measured, I suppose I've lost a lot of it this year. I gained a confidant and made a staunch friend, though, for there was Bruce, dawdling over work which could have been completed quickly and with ease hours before. How else could I have learned there was no one at home until six each day, no one who cared enough to listen to what was a most unusual background in archaeology which he planned to make his life work? I had been giving stories about everything but this pulsing interest and enthusiasm. No wonder he had shown a stolid indifference to reading! Once I had rectified my misunderstanding, it was gratifying to have the principal ask one day, "What's got into Bruce? I almost fell over him on the playground today. He was so absorbed in *reading a book*, he was oblivious to everything around him."

A daily conversation period, class-controlled, during which children report personal experiences and current news items has great values for them as well as for me. For some, interests

3. Knight, E. E.: "Personality Development Through Reading." This issue of *The Reading Teacher*.

are intensified; others may catch the spark for a new interest. And I? I just try to keep up with them!

Since group work can be made particularly significant during the so-called gang age, panel or group discussions serve well in identifying and airing possible solutions to common problems. Such topics as "What I Think of Comic Books," "How I Would Improve Our School," and "How I Would Improve Our Town" served as preliminaries for an assembly featuring a pupils' panel on "Television Problems with Parents." This was followed immediately by a mothers' panel on "Television Problems with Children."

Following completion of an achievement testing program, teachers in our building are encouraged to have an individual, personal conference with each child concerning his own test. "Thinking aloud" on responses, the child and the teacher have an opportunity to diagnose, correct, and plan a program of curative action if needed. After this preliminary conference, parents are invited to confer with the teacher.

Respect the integrity of each individual and believe in his basic desire to succeed. At the present moment, I can think of no better place to adopt this recommendation than the elementary school report card. For the first time, our community has in use a card which takes for its basis of marking, *each child's own ability*, not his grade level, not teachers' or parents' expectation, not standard norms, or course requirement, but his ability as we (teacher, principal, nurse, psychologist) see it from continuous

growth patterns on cumulative record cards, test results, observations, conferences, et cetera.

You probably have a Lucille in your class, too, but let me introduce her to you. In all her five years of school life before entering grade six, she could never earn a "passing" mark in reading because it had been based on grade level requirements. She was always about two years below grade, and no matter how hard she worked—and she is one of the most conscientious little girls I've met—she just couldn't reach grade level. With the advent of the new report card, I had the pleasure and privilege of giving Lucille satisfactory grades in all phases of reading. This, of course, was no panacea for all her reading difficulties, but there were no two happier people anywhere than Lucille and I when she "passed" in reading. I glory in using the report card which is based on each child's ability.

To group or not to group? That is the question! Yes, I should apologize for that paraphrasing, but it is so apt. There are problems connected with grouping. As Dr. Roma Gans put it, "How can you possibly hide the very obvious child-drawn conclusion 'that wherever Joe is, that is the dumb group'?" No matter how you may try to disguise it, children *know* how you group for basal reading instruction.

Let's be more original and, of far greater import, more thoughtful before typing children. In the upper grades let's consider grouping by interests, for different types of skills essential to success and enjoyment of the content subjects, for reading or

telling a favorite story which might be dramatized. Let's group by children's choice. Three or four class-chosen leaders may meet together to make up their own groups consisting of friends with whom they'd just like to sit down and read. Let's group so that experiences in free reading can be shared and in these smaller groups, each can make greater contribution and have greater participation. Let's group by sheer chance. Children love to draw a number, report to a certain place, not knowing until all numbers have been taken just who is going to be in the same group.

Have you tried grouping to hear original stories? Most children do their most expressive reading in selections written by themselves.

Teaching skills and using materials at instructional levels isn't easy, but it pays rich rewards in increased learnings. Strang's (3) comment is one I shall long remember. "Every child reads on his own level; if the passage is too difficult for him, he becomes a 'reading problem'."

I'd like to mention one invaluable way to determine the instructional level if it is not known. Dolch (1) recommends "testing with a book" when a test is not handy or it is important to maintain an informal relation with the student. He suggests any regular text, unless the student, by own statement or reputation, is very poor in performance. Then it is probably advisable to use a relatively easy reading book.

First Step: Have student open to unfamiliar part and read aloud one paragraph or so. "Feed" him un-

known words instantly, watching carefully kind of words you have to tell—common ones such as *very, because, etc.*, or unusual words.

Second Step: Have student close book and tell you as much as he can of what he has read.

Third Step: Have student read next section aloud. Do not tell words. When he stops, tell him to skip words and read to end of sentence. Ask him what he thinks the words are.

Fourth Step: Have student read another section. Do not tell unknown words; try to find out if reader has any method of word attack. (1) Ask how new word starts. Find out if he can use letter by letter method or sounding. (2) See if student can attack new word by word-parts. As Dolch says, "This type of test follows the basic principle 'that the best test of activity is activity itself.'"

I cannot leave skills and materials at instructional levels without thinking of Faith. She certainly had the skills necessary for reading stories, but she admitted, "I just can't get social studies." We learned together that skills and vocabulary are specialized in the content subjects. Unlimited, purposeful practice in using an index, table of contents, an atlas, an encyclopedia, reference book, etc., should be part of the social studies lessons. Explanations, discussions, demonstrations, and practical checks of individual competence help children "get" history, geography and science.

A lush atmosphere for reading in the classroom is desirable. In particular I would like to suggest:

1. Catalogs, advertising material (wonderful for teaching discriminat-

ing reading), newspapers, magazines.

2. Movies, slides (purchased and self-made by children), phonograph records, filmstrips, and tape recordings.

3. Manipulative materials.

4. Favorite books from each child's own personal bookshelf.

5. A cumulative file of places to visit, including such information as distance, hours of visitation, admission charge, available facilities, names and addresses of persons who might be available for school visitation or interviews and include a thumb-nail sketch of their interests or talents which might be shared.

In Conclusion

I've enjoyed discussing "Personality Development Through Reading" for I find that it pin-points some of the

growing areas of research about child growth and development as related to reading. It has helped me realize *why* children look, feel, and behave as they do. It has made me more keenly aware than ever that "a reading program must be integrated into the total curriculum and the total experience and development of the individual."

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Spoken Language — A Key to Reading

by Muriel Crosby

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Wilmington, Delaware, Public Schools

WHEN WE speak of language and attempt to study any phase of it, we must be constantly aware of the functions of language in modern living. First, we know that language is a vehicle for communication, for thinking, and for the control of behavior. Second, we know that the four aspects of language development—listening, speaking, reading, and writing—are interdependent in influencing the child's intellectual and personality growth. Because of this the school must create a curriculum designed to foster the growth of children through effective language development. In exploring the importance of facility with spoken language in the development of reading skills, we must also consider at times all four aspects of language development.

Daily Activities and Language

All of the child's activities in his daily living reflect the many types of language usage that are common to all of us: conversation, discussion, making explanations, giving directions, using the telephone, speaking before a group, telling a story, or giving a report of an experience. And it is in these daily experiences in living that the alert teacher finds opportunity to demonstrate the interdependence of facility in spoken language and the development of reading skills.

Seeing some of our teachers¹ at work will, perhaps, best illustrate the fact that proficiency in reading skills is dependent in large measure upon facility in spoken language.

Conversation Is Important

Some seven-year-olds in the second grade wrote their own experience stories and shared them during their reading period one day. A tape recording provided a verbatim report of the easy conversation between children and teacher which accompanied the reading of the original stories and made them more meaningful to everyone.

* * *

TEACHER: We have some stories here that have been beautifully illustrated. I would like to talk with you about your work. Here is a nice picture and such a lovely story. It looks like everyone in your family is having a wonderful time here, Jodey.

JODEY: Yes, they are, Mrs. I.

TEACHER: It is a fishing trip, isn't it, Jodey?

JODEY: Yes, it is.

TEACHER: Where do you usually fish, Jodey?

JODEY: I fish in the lake in the

¹ The following teachers of the Wilmington Public Schools contributed illustrations: Ellen Adair, Mildred Patterson, Helen Irons, Marian Brown, and Theda Wilson.

woods about two miles from home.

TEACHER: It is very convenient, isn't it?

JODEY: Yes, but it isn't too convenient for my little brother because when we go fishing down there, we have to walk.

TEACHER: What do you use for bait?

JODEY: Well, sometimes I use a trout fish and sometimes I use a trout fly, or my daddy and I do, and my mother and brother use just worms.

TEACHER: You get them in the garden?

JODEY: They get them in the garden and we use the expensive fishing.

TEACHER: Bobby is a fisherman over here. What is a fly, Bobby, can you tell us?

BOBBY: A fly is a little wooden object, then they have tails stuck on to them and a hook in between the tail feathers.

TEACHER: Do you ever use a trout fly?

BOBBY: Once in a while.

TEACHER: Jodey, we would like to have you read your story.

JODEY: Yes, I would be glad to. I am reading about my picture.

FISHING

I am writing about my picture. The whole R. family is fishing in a lake near the woods. I caught a big bass. Bill, my brother, caught some little bass. Mother has bad luck. And she always has bad luck when she goes fishing. There is a helicopter flying low overhead. We saw some delicious watercress along the bank and we picked some for dinner. While we were picking the watercress Dad yelled I've got a bite! and we came

running to see what he had. He had a bass, but not as large as mine!

TEACHER: So you got a bass bigger than your daddy's?

JODEY: Yes. He always gets the big fish.

TEACHER: How about that!

JODEY: One time when I was fishing I got a trout and my daddy got a smaller size trout. It was only about a half-pounder.

TEACHER: Jodey, when you were writing, how did you know the spelling of the words? You have some pretty big words here.

JODEY: Yes. I made a dictionary in school.

TEACHER: You made a dictionary in school? What was it like?

JODEY: When Mrs. C. was here, I think it was last week, she gave us little sheets of paper to make little designs on and that was our cover and then we wrote our ABC's in it. We didn't write A, B, C, D, E, F and things like that but we just wrote the alphabet.

TEACHER: In alphabetical order?

JODEY: Yes, we used it for writing letters and if we didn't know we looked in there. I can look on the chart for words I don't know and in this story I found the word helicopter. I can find the words I can sound out, or I could ask Mrs. I. to put it on the board, or I could copy it in the dictionary, or I could look in the word dictionary on Page 146.

* * *

Such conversation is important. It is tremendously significant in helping children develop facility in language. Opportunities to clarify meanings and exchange ideas are limitless in an in-

formal social setting. Facility in language can be attained only as children have opportunities to use language. The climate in which reading skills are developed has great impact upon a child's attitude toward reading and his enjoyment of it. Easy conversation is a tool as well as an art in teaching and learning.

The Boy Who Couldn't Read

Larry is an intelligent eleven-year-old who characterizes himself as "the dumbest in the class" because he can't seem to learn to read. A bit from the record his helping teacher kept during her work with him provides a thumbnail sketch of Larry and the way his teacher planned to use language to create interest in reading and ability to read.

* * *

Larry is in the fourth grade but reading on a first grade level. He seems intelligent, has a good speaking vocabulary, and understands the principles of word attack but has trouble reading such words as time, when, eats, here, out, must, works, make, soon, cowboy, start, her, calf, ride, find, way, white, again, are, came, things, asleep. I talked with him and explained that many boys of his age who were bright had trouble with reading. He told me that he was the dumbest in the class. The book that he was reading with the lowest class group was third year level. I left three books with him: "Seeing Why" (second grade science as he is very interested in electricity), "On Four Feet" and "Three Little Elephants" (both first grade but not babyish).

On Friday, I took three more

books: "Cowboy Sam and Porky," "Friday, the Arapaho Indian," and "Pilot Jack Knight." He read "Cowboy Sam" to himself; then we talked about and tried to decide what would happen. He wasn't too interested in it. I noted the words he didn't know, and later typed them in a little notebook he had brought. As I typed, he spelled the word then said it. He knew all but three or four of the 28 he had missed previously.

I talked about writing stories and making a book. That idea intrigued him. As he told me about his uncle in Alaska, I typed and he read the story to me. He had some difficulty reading because his speaking vocabulary is so good. I told him that I would do that every time I came, and if he could think of some stories when I wasn't there, he could ask Mrs. P. how to spell the words. I also told him that sometime he could type.

Larry couldn't understand how I could be so interested in him.

Here are two of the short stories from Larry's own book. He can read these, and he and his teachers believe he is on the way toward overcoming his handicap.

ELECTRICITY

I can tell you anything you want to know about electricity except how many volts are in an electric chair!

I have been interested in electricity for a long time. I have read books from the library, and made my own experiments. My cousin and I used generators in our experiments. Once we made a thing which sparked so much we couldn't get within three feet of it. For that experiment we used the switch box from an electric train.

RECIPE FOR ICE POPSICLES

Take an ice cube tray and take out the things which make the cubes. Take one box of Jello and put a cup and a half of hot water with it and mix it up. Put it in the refrigerator and let it stay in the freezing section until it is almost frozen. Then cut it into squares, and be sure your father doesn't eat it up before you do! If you want, you can put sugar in it.

* * *

Larry's reading handicaps will be familiar to many teachers in the intermediate level of the elementary schools. The approaches used by the helping teacher in working with Larry provide clues to the eventual solution of his problem. Finding interests, establishing rapport, using experiences for reading, building confidence—each of these important processes functioned first in the medium of spoken language. This illustration serves further to emphasize the interrelationships among the four aspects of language: listening, speaking, reading, and writing.

Reading As a Resource in Discussion

As children progress in the elementary school, reading becomes increasingly important as a means of providing essential information. A favorite experience of one sixth-grade group is the discussion which develops the study of a weekly newspaper received by the class. The map is used to stimulate discussion of developments reported from many sources. Children are encouraged to listen to the radio news reports, watch television and movies, and read widely in

newspapers, magazines and current books. One or two bits from a tape recording of one of the news discussions follows.

* * *

TEACHER: Arthur, what's a tornado?

CHILD: A tornado is wind that goes around in circles and affects anything that is in its way.

TEACHER: Have any of you seen anything on television or heard anything in the news about this tornado?

CHILD: I read in the paper that after the tornado in Texas it poured down rain all day long, and when the children came home from school, they found their homes standing in water.

At every opportunity Miss B. asks the children the meaning of certain words, and there is usually enough discussion to insure understanding. Another bit of the discussion illustrates this point.

TEACHER: What is a corporation?

CHILD: A corporation is a lot of companies joined together.

CHILD: A big business.

TEACHER: What do you mean by assets?

CHILD: A lot of money left over after they have paid their bills.

* * *

The teacher in the above illustration avoids, by her insistence on understanding, the pitfall of assuming that because a child acquires a speaking or reading vocabulary he thereby acquires meaning. By the time the middle grades are reached, nearly all that a child in our culture does is affected by the scope and quality of his reading. His reading, in turn, is affected by facility in spoken language.

Reporting on Famous People

Some fifth-grade children had selected as a major interest the study of famous people. Each child selected an individual, planned his study so that many resources were used, and reported his findings to the group. Some excerpts from the discussion of these reports reflect the ways in which reading interests are stimulated.

* * *

Marlene has just finished her report on Joseph Stalin.

TEACHER: Why did you pick Joseph Stalin? How did you hear his name?

MARLENE: We were looking at "I Love Lucy" one night, and then they said, "We interrupt this program to bring a special bulletin." It said that Joseph Stalin was dead.

TEACHER: So you wanted to find out who he was? That's the way some of us get curious about people.

Doris' comment on her choice reflects an interest of long standing.

DORIS: My famous person was George Washington Carver, and I read about George Washington Carver in third grade, and when I was in fourth grade I think we did some studying about him and in the fifth grade he is my famous person. I've read books about him and read the encyclopedia.

At the end of the reporting period the teacher and children summarized all of the resources used.

TEACHER: Let's review what we've done. We've used dictionaries, we've used encyclopedias, we've used books. What are some other things we've used?

CHILDREN: Movies, maps, maga-

zines, newspapers, pictures, the librarian, research books, newsreel, and television.

* * *

One of the criteria for evaluating a reporting period is the amount and quality of discussion which is stimulated. A second criteria is the stimulation of interests in wider reading which should result. The good teacher knows that reading opens doors to broader horizons, and she is ever alert to foster wide reading by her children. Shared experiences are richer experiences. Opportunities to talk about them should be made as frequently as possible.

The Fly Up

Lassie is a child whose failure to learn to read in the primary school has caused deep-seated emotional problems. She has been a withdrawn, much-too-quiet little girl who conforms easily and too often. During the past few months the helping teacher has worked with Lassie on her reading problem. The value of easy relationships, much conversation about a child's real interests, and the use of experiences as story material is shown in the case of Lassie.

Lassie began to dictate her own stories to the teacher. These were compiled in a book which Lassie proudly read. Her story, "The Fly Up," is quoted here for it represents a contrast in story interest, content, and vocabulary to the usual first reader which this older child's achievement in reading seemed to justify. Children's spoken language facility provides the discerning teacher with many clues.

THE FLY UP

I have been a Brownie for three years. Last Tuesday I flew up to Girl Scouts. There were ten girls in the group. It was very exciting.

The chairman of the Girl Scouts came to the program. We lined up and said the Scout laws. I was the fifth child so I said the fifth rule. It was "A Girl Scout is courteous." We were given a Girl Scout pin and a pair of wings. We will sew the wings on our uniforms.

My mother bought presents for each of us. They were Girl Scout bracelets.

We had punch, lemonade and crackers to eat. We had a program, too. Some children played the piano, and my sister and a friend sang a duet. Two girls played violins, and I played the trumpet. I played "The Farmer in the Dell." Susan twirled the baton. We had fun.

Spoken Language — A Key to Reading

Upon the elementary school, tradition and public expectation have placed the responsibility for teaching boys and girls to read. Our modern society has created the need for increasing and more effective reading than has been necessary in the past.

One of the most effective approaches to helping children develop more effective reading skills is the stimulation and utilization of children's facility in spoken language. We know that:

Language facility develops only through use. Yet too often we work hard to maintain a quiet classroom.

Language facility develops only

through experience. Yet too often we ignore out-of-school experiences altogether and provide few curriculum experiences.

Language facility is fostered by physical movement (watch the young child using his whole body when he talks). Yet too often we hamper movement in the schoolroom.

Motivation for reading is high when interest is keen. Yet too often we fail to use the experiences of boys and girls, substituting instead the flat, unrelated material of a textbook as the foundation of the reading program. (A case in point is the six-year-old who read aloud "See Sue. Sue, see. See Sue run." and remarked with an embarrassed look at his father, "Silly, isn't it?")

Teacher-child relationships influence the rate at which the child progresses in language growth, and hence in reading growth. Yet too often our class sizes prevent the teacher's giving adequate personal attention to each child.

There is a positive relationship between speech difficulties and deficiencies in reading ability. Yet too often we are unable to provide the specialized help needed to remedy speech difficulties.

There is a positive relationship between all aspects of language: listening, speaking, reading, and writing. Yet too often we try to teach each aspect separately.

For the child, each spoken language experience in school should foster, among other learnings, the development of reading skills. Facility with spoken language is an important factor in becoming a good reader.

The Reading Workshop

How to Help Children Sound Out New Words They Meet in Their Reading

by Ethel Maney
Reading Consultant, Public Schools
Delaware County, Pennsylvania

"HOW CAN I help children sound out the new words they meet in their reading?" That is a question frequently asked by teachers at various grade levels.

To answer this question such topics as these must be investigated:

Does the weakness stem from inadequacy in one or all of the separate skills of phonics ability such as auditory discrimination and perception, visual discrimination and perception, or auditory-visual perception? Might the difficulty be traced to a weakness in handling the structural analysis skills which include syllabication and building from root words? Finally, if competency in each is revealed, could there then be difficulty with the complicated process of blending the appropriate word recognition knowledge so that a successful attack can be made on new words in contextual settings?

Many Reading Workshops have been set up to help teachers with the techniques and skills involved in diagnosis and instruction in word analysis. The material in this article has been used successfully in such workshop sessions. It is presented here at the request of many teachers.

How to Use This Material

This article is limited to material pertinent to the development of auditory perception. This is only a small segment of the comprehensive word analysis program.

Certain techniques and jobs are outlined in a sequential manner similar to that which many primary teachers follow. Because many upper-grade teachers also find some children who need to begin from scratch in their word analysis skills, these techniques are adapted where warranted to the interest level of older children.

In addition, check points are provided throughout so that teachers may readily identify the particular area of weakness within their groups. In short, the material can be used for diagnosis by using the check points. If weakness is noted, the material preceding that check point might be reviewed. If competency is shown on a particular check point, it would be well to proceed to the next check-point. For teaching purposes, it might be well to follow the outline from the point where the weakness is spotted.

To use this material most effectively, a teacher should realize that

not all devices will be needed by every child. Neither will the presentation need to be followed in detail. Most important of all, this material will serve its purpose best if care is taken to use it only as children show both a readiness and a need for it.

Techniques and Jobs

STAGE I. IDENTIFYING SOUNDS

Teaching Technique

Primary: "We are going to play a game. Close your eyes. Who can tell what is making this sound?" (Example: *bell ringing, pencil sharpener.*)

Upper grades: "Let's find out how keen your ears are. Close your eyes." (Make a sound.) "Now tell or write what you think made that sound."

Workshop Job #1

List activities and collect related materials which can be used for sound effects. Choose only those that can be handled easily and that are within the child's experience. Start with the easy ones; work up to the more subtle ones. (Example: *Easy*—Ring a bell, closing a book, snapping the fingers, tearing paper, bouncing a ball. *Harder*—Closing a purse, striking a match, running a pencil over a comb, opening and closing a zipper.)

STAGE II. IDENTIFYING RHYME

A. IDENTIFYING RHYME IN CONTEXT

Teaching Technique

Primary: "I am going to repeat a jingle. Two of the words will sound alike or rhyme. Listen and tell me which two words rhyme: 'Little Jack Horner sat in the corner'."

Upper grades: "Listen while I say two lines of a poem. Then tell me which words rhyme: 'There was a

young lady of Ryde who ate a green apple and died'."

Workshop Job #2

List familiar rhymes appropriate to the interest level of the group. (A similar technique can be used with rhymes composed in the group.)

B. IDENTIFYING RHYME IN CONTROLLED ISOLATION

Teaching Technique

All levels: "I am going to tell you a word (*rain*). Now I shall tell you three more words. One will rhyme with *rain*. Listen and tell me which one rhymes with *rain*." (Example: *rain—them, can, pain.*) Gradually increase the difficulty of the exercise by including words which are almost rhyming words. (Example: *dine—heard, hard, dime, fine.*)

Workshop Job #3

List at least 10 series of four or five words each in which one of the words rhymes with the first word.

C. IDENTIFYING RHYME IN COMPLETE ISOLATION

Teaching Technique

All levels: "I am going to repeat some words. Listen and then tell me which words rhyme: *level, broke, shell, soak.*" Variation: "I am going to repeat some words. All rhyme except one. Which word does not rhyme: *check, pick, wreck.*"

Workshop Job #4

List 10 series of four or five words each in which two rhyming words are included.

STAGE III. SUPPLYING RHYME

A. SUPPLYING RHYME IN CONTEXT

Teaching Technique

All levels: "I am going to repeat a

jingle and ask you to supply the last word." (*Examples: Primary*—"Jack and Jill went up the—." *Upper grades*—"I think that I shall never see a poem lovely as a —.")

Workshop Job #5

Use the same or similar material as that designed for Job #2.

(Similar technique can be used effectively with unfamiliar rhymes brought in by the teacher or composed by teacher and pupils.)

B. SUPPLYING RHYME IN RIDDLES *Teaching Technique*

Primary: "Who can guess this word? It rhymes with *sled*. You sleep in it. What is it?" (*bed*)

Upper grades: "Can you guess this word? It rhymes with *flower*. It means a light rainfall." (*shower*)

Workshop Job #6

Design riddles that fit the interest level of the group. Get children's help in making up riddles.

C. SUPPLYING RHYME IN ISOLATION *Teaching Technique*

All levels: "Who can think of a word that rhymes with — (*dirt*, for example)?" Accept any rhyming word such as *skirt*, *hurt*, *shirt*, etc.

Workshop Job #7

List words for which rhyming words are possible. Choose those outside the reading vocabulary of the youngsters.

D. CHECK POINT

Section C above may be used to appraise the child's rhyming ability. If he is able to rhyme readily, it is unlikely that he will need help on the preceding stages. Next check point is with initial consonants.

STAGE IV. IDENTIFYING SOUNDS OF SPOKEN WORDS

A. IDENTIFYING THE INITIAL SOUNDS OF OBJECTS SHOWN IN PICTURES.

All levels: Choose a picture that has objects familiar to the child. Begin with initial consonants most frequently met in beginning reading, for example the letter M: "What do you see in this picture? Some of the things you mentioned have names that begin like *Mother*. Which ones begin like *Mother*?"

Workshop Job #8

Make a file of pictures that lend themselves to this teaching job.

B. IDENTIFYING THE INITIAL SOUNDS IN ORAL CONTEXT

Teaching Technique

"Listen to this sentence. Some of the words begin like *Mother*. Tell me which words you hear that begin like *Mother*." (Example: The moon shines at midnight.) Variation: Identify words that do not begin like a given word.

Workshop Job #9

Make a list of sentences using words for each consonant needed. For finer discrimination include words that may be difficult to distinguish such as "The paper bag puffed up bigger."

C. IDENTIFYING THE INITIAL SOUNDS OF WORDS IN ISOLATION

Teaching Technique

"Listen to these words and then tell which ones begin with the same sound—or which one does not begin like the others."

Workshop Job #10

Design at least 10 series of words for each consonant as needed. Gradually introduce into the series words

that may be difficult to distinguish—f-v, m-n, b-p-d.

D. IDENTIFYING THE NAME OF THE LETTER WITH THE SOUND (FOLLOWS THE ASSOCIATION OF THE NAME WITH THE PRINTED SYMBOL)

Teaching Technique

"We know that the first letter of *Mother* is *M*. Other words which have a beginning sound like *Mother* begin with *M*, too. Which of these begin with *M*?" Example: (easy) *hand, coal, market*; (hard) *fork, moth, nine*.

Workshop Job #11

Design 10 series of increasing difficulty.

STAGE V. SUPPLYING THE INITIAL SOUNDS OF WORDS

A. MATCHING THE INITIAL SOUND

Teaching Technique

Primary: "Mary went to the circus. She saw something that begins like her name. What might she have seen?" Variation: "I packed my trunk and in it I put something that begins like *ball*. What might it have been?"

Upper grades: "Let us try to think of some catchy advertising ideas for these articles on the table. The idea might be a name for the product or a slogan that would promote its sale. There is one rule—most of the words you choose must begin with the same sound." (Example: "Pin-sharp pencils," and "sudsy soap.")

Workshop Job #12

Collect advertisements, lines of poetry, games, and other materials or activities which use alliterations.

B. ASSOCIATING THE NAME OF THE LETTER WITH THE ORAL SYMBOL.

Teaching Technique

All levels: "With what letter do you think this word begins? *Bench, pitcher, midnight*, etc."

Workshop Job #13

Compile a list of words beyond the reading vocabulary for use in analyzing the child's competency at this stage.

C. CHECK POINT

If the reader shows competency in a test based upon B above and Job #13, it is unlikely that he would need help on the previous jobs pertaining to the development of auditory perception of initial consonant sounds. The next check should determine the individual's ability to apply the previous skills to the pronunciation of a new word.

* * *

The subsequent stages in the development of auditory perception of consonants are concerned with final consonants as well as with the initial and final consonant blends or digraphs. These stages need not be outlined in detail since they follow the pattern already given for initial consonants.

The most important of the phonic skills and probably the least well developed is that of utilizing phonic knowledge in word attack. The measure of a reader's word attack skill is the degree with which he is able to make it function. The remainder of this article will suggest two ways by which the skills outlined could be applied to the pronunciation of an unfamiliar word.

* * *

APPLICATION OF THE AUDITORY SKILLS TO WORD ATTACK (FOLLOWS

the development of an adequate sight word vocabulary.)

A. USING CONTEXT CLUES AND INITIAL CONSONANT CLUES TO ATTACK AN UNKNOWN WORD. (Context clues refer to meaning clues.)

Teaching Technique

Teacher writes a sentence with all known words except one. (Example: *Tom can ride a b. . .*.)

"Who can think of a word that would fit into this sentence? It must begin with the letter *b*. That is, it must begin like the word *ball*." As each answer is offered, try it in the sentence to determine whether it fits the context or "makes sense."

Workshop Job—Attack #1

Design other sentences with the missing word at various places within the sentence. Use some sentences which lend themselves to picture answers so that the children can use them for independent work after they understand the procedure. (Example: *Sally ran to get the h. . .*.)

B. USING CONTEXT CLUES, INITIAL CONSONANT SUBSTITUTION, AND ANALOGY IN WORD ATTACK.

Teaching Technique

"Betty wants Tom to do something. Let us find out what she wants him to do." Write: *Come and hide*.

"What word do you know that looks like this new word (points to *hide*) except for the first letter?" Note: *ride* would be the known word already in the children's sight vocabulary. If no child responds try this: "You know this word. (Teacher writes *ride* under *hide*.) What is this word? (Pointing to *ride*). The new word (*hide*) is just like the word we

know (*ride*) except for one letter. The new word begins with *h* like *house* and *horse*. But it rhymes with *ride*. What is the new word? Now let's see whether that word will fit into our sentence."

Try one or two other examples immediately to reinforce the learning. Build always from the known sight words and have the children check the meaning in the context.

Workshop Job: Attack #2

Design sentences for further group practice. Design others for individual use in independent activities. For example, children could be taught to put the known word under the new word and then to draw a picture to illustrate the sentence. Pick out words from the basal readers which will lend themselves to the use of this technique. Use words for which the children already have meaning.

C. CHECK POINT: WORD ATTACK

Techniques A and B are equally important in appraising the individual's competency in using the previously outlined skills in word attack.

Remember: To be proficient in word attack, the reader must be able not only to recognize and associate sounds but to apply that knowledge.

Materials for Book Week

The Children's Book Council, 50 W. 53 St., New York 19, N. Y., is ready to supply all necessary materials for National Children's Book Week to be held November 15-21, 1953. Send inquiries to above address.

Booklists, Book Fair and Book Week Helps From the Children's Book Council

by Lucy Tompkins
Executive Secretary
Children's Book Council
50 W. 53 St., New York 19

THERE IS today such a quantity of good and beautiful books for children—good in the high quality of their content, beautiful in their illustrations and general design—it would seem that no parent or teacher should be at a loss to meet a youngster's reading needs. And yet many of us *are* at such a loss. We don't know where or how to begin to find the right books for the right children or, once having done so, how we may stimulate our youngsters' interest in them. A glance in our corner store at the rich display of comics, and our Johnny deeply engrossed, and we say, "What's the use anyway?"

Before we go any further, and because it bears right on this point of parental (and teacher) anxiety—I want to quote from Amy Loveman's article, "Building a Home Library," written and printed for distribution by the Children's Book Council last year. Miss Loveman says of comics, Westerns and the like, "It is no evidence of juvenile ineptitude or errant instincts that boys and girls find entertainment in such literature; it is merely the expression of a natural delight in what is funny, or dramatic, or exciting, an instinctive desire to translate impulses and half-formed longings into a vicarious sort of real-

ity. . . . If the home library is to combat bad or mediocre reading fare for the young it must do so not by denouncing the type of literature which titillates the taste of all children for the strange or the grotesque or the exciting but by substituting for it books of distinction which still satisfy that taste."

It was to encourage the love of good literature that the Children's Book Council was established in 1945 as a year-round non-profit organization. It functions as headquarters for National Children's Book Week and as a general information and promotion center for everything connected with children's books. The Council sustains itself by annual dues from its members (sixty-two leading publishing houses) and by the sale of inexpensive Book Week promotion aids. It maintains headquarters at 50 West 53rd Street, New York City.

As an information center, the Children's Book Council receives countless inquiries for guidance in the selection of books—that is, requests for booklists. Where booklists of a special sort are needed and the Council has the information or can tell the writer where to get it, we answer requests individually, according to their needs and our knowledge. As for general

booklists—they are so numerous that it would take a small catalogue to list them all. Accordingly a special committee of Council members has compiled a list of "Twelve Recommended Booklists" all under \$1.00 and averaging 25c. This is included in the Council publication "The World of Children's Books" and appended also to our reprint of Miss Loveman's article "Building a Home Library."

We answer inquiries of all kinds as fully as we can, standing ready to help in "getting more worthwhile books into the hands of more children everywhere" in whatever way seems feasible. We issue quarterly a *Calendar* with dates of importance around which book features may be planned, and with a news and gossip column about the children's book field entitled "The Looking Glass."

In our *Manual of Book Week Aids*, issued annually and free on request, we list our Book Week materials. We also include sources of other aids in the promotion of children's books—for instance, how to secure plays, records, films, or radio scripts.

Book Fair Helps

A tremendous proportion of our inquiries read, "We want to have a book fair. How do we do it?" Book fairs are wonderful fun, and we know of no better way to stimulate children and parents alike in good reading for "the coming generation" than a fair. So—I would like briefly to set down here some of the answers to "How do we do it?"

There are two major ways of running a book fair. Available throughout the year from the State Library

Commission in 29 states are traveling exhibits of children's books. The Children's Book Council will be glad to send anyone a list of the State Library Commissions that have joined this project. For libraries and schools this is an excellent way of presenting to the community a representative selection of the current publishing output in children's books—and by "current" we mean both the brand-new contributions and the wonderful new editions of old and classic favorites.

The other approach and one that would make it possible to sell or take orders for books—to meet fair expenses and perhaps help raise money for a worthy community project besides—is to set up an exhibit of books in cooperation with your local bookseller. Or you may secure books for exhibits through jobbers and dealers who supply children's book exhibits. The list of these dealers the country over is an extensive one. It has been compiled by the Publishers' Liaison Committee for distribution by the Children's Book Council free on request. Many of these dealers manage the whole show. Others send the books and leave the production to you.

This brings us to the "how" of putting on the fair. Our own Children's Book Council publication, "The World of Children's Books," (\$1.50) includes an article by Dorothy L. McFadden (long-time director of *The New York Times* annual book fair, and now directing its year-round traveling book exhibit in the Greater New York area). This is entitled "How to Run a Book Fair" which covers the problems as completely as anything

we know. Besides this, free on request to the Council, is an excellent article reprinted from the *Country Gentleman* "Has Your School Had a Book Fair?" *The New York Herald Tribune* has a workbook on how to put on a book fair (price 15c) and *Scholastic Magazine* has an article, "Let's Have a Book Bazaar" (price 25c). From one or more of these sources you should learn all that you can in advance on the "how" of the matter. And by the way, if you want speakers, as these articles suggest, you may write to the Children's Book Council for a Speaker's Request Form. With the information you fill in we shall be glad to circularize the membership for the kind of speaker you want.

For National Children's Book Week we are ready with suggestions and materials useful in celebrating it. But these suggestions and materials are no less useful the year around. Our *Manual* lists the materials we issue each year, together with some of former years—the annual Book Week posters, streamers, Book Week poster bookmarks, Newbery - Caldecott medal bookmarks, records, a publication called "The World of Children's Books," and other materials which may be used in schools and libraries for children's book programs of all sorts.

Two major problems are finding the right books for children and then stimulating their interest in these books. Of the two problems, the one of stimulating interest is much harder for the teacher than the parent. Parental enthusiasm for books is, generally speaking, the most effective basic stimulus for children's reading enthu-

siasm: the "readingest" children come from the "readingest" parents.

But for the teacher, her own enthusiasm is not enough. Simple book displays with decorative display materials, parent-teacher book programs, radio programs and the full scale book fair are some of the ways to bring both parent and child to the notion that "Reading Is Fun." This, by the way, is the Book Week slogan this year, as well as last. It is a slogan and a view which we at the Council would like to see conveyed to every teacher, parent and child.

Each year in our *Manual of Book Week Aids* we write a little piece about the subject for which all these aids exist—children and their reading. This year we said that "Time was when it was felt that work was work and play was play, and if, by chance, the two coincided the work was suspect. But in actual fact, as all educators now know, the most successful men and women are those for whom their work is fun. If early in childhood we find that reading is fun, we shall find it so always. During school years and after, when much of our 'work' is with books, our early pleasure at the sight of a book . . . will continue and grow." The Children's Book Council wants to help make reading fun in every way possible. One of our editor members keeps referring to children's book editors as "dedicated" people. She is altogether right. They are. They feel, as teachers, librarians and an increasing number of parents feel, that books are the "food of youth" and that the future of America and of the world depends very largely on the "readingest" ones.

Five-Star Books for Reading Teachers

Edited by Nova Nestricks
Reading Editor
The Macmillan Company

BEULAH KANTER EPHRON, *Emotional Difficulties in Reading*. Julian Press, Inc. New York, 1953. \$3.75.

It is not often that one has the experience of being unable to put down an educational book he is reading, and yet that is what happens to the reader of Beulah Ephron's *Emotional Difficulties in Reading*. Caught in the stories behind these young people coming for help, one reads on eagerly, watching the development of the individual studied, gaining further insight into human behavior.

While it has been known for some time that emotional difficulties are a major cause of reading problems, it is only recently that such books as this one have been available, books that spell out some of the specifics in these cases. Helen Robinson's *Why Pupils Fail in Reading* is one of the research studies many teachers have come to know and it has served to point up the need for working with the home and for giving as much importance to a youngster's social-emotional development as to his academic growth. Virginia Axline's article, "Non-Directive Therapy for Poor Readers," published in the *Journal of Consulting Psychology* in 1947 and later made available in reprint leaflets, is another that gave many teachers a sense of direction. Miss Ephron's book is an excellent sequel to these and others like them.

This material is given in the form

of case studies with verbatim counseling sessions recorded.

Though written primarily about adolescent and adult reading, there is much here for teachers of young children as well. The way abstraction interferes with all of one's life, not only reading but other subjects and social relationships, is clearly portrayed. Ways of helping parents with their children are emphasized. Happenings that hurt and sometimes scar children are glimpsed.

Some of the shocking things teachers do to youngsters come directly from the mouths of people who have suffered them and give us pause as teachers. Donald for instance stated that "The children get the feeling that the teachers don't want them around at all." When asked to tell more about his teachers he continued, "Well, some of them are nice, but there are too many that aren't so nice. For, example, the — teacher used to bang you on the head with a blackboard eraser if you talked, or if she *thought* you were talking, even if you weren't. It didn't hurt, but it got chalk dust in your hair. And — teacher frightens us by talking sarcastically. Nobody wants to recite because of the things she says. She can really make you feel embarrassed. She doesn't mind saying, 'You're even dumber than so-and-so,' and things like that . . ."

Asked when he started calling him-

self dumb (as he had just done) Mike said, "When? The first grade." Asked what happened in the first grade he went on, "I was always in the third group in reading. I wasn't smart . . ." What are we doing to children with our reading groups? There is much here to think about. Many troubles could be remedied quickly if dealt with in early childhood or even in the primary grades, instead of becoming the deep-seated problems of young people.

The non-directive counseling techniques shown in this material would be helpful to a teacher with parent-conferencing or student-conferencing. The book definitely states that it does not propose to encourage the practice of psychotherapy without proper training. But it does attempt, and successfully, it would seem, to sensitize teachers to the kinds of problems that lie beneath the surface of reading and study difficulties and to alert teachers to the need of helping these children or getting help for them.

Myrtle N. Searles

*Assistant Professor of Education
State University of New York,
New Paltz*

MARION NESBITT, *A Public School for Tomorrow*. Harper Bros., New York, 1953.

In *A Public School for Tomorrow*, Marion Nesbitt presents a down-to-earth picture of a school in which teachers sincerely believe that children learn what they live. This book does not, as the title may suggest, portray a dream school of the future. It contains an accurate description and analysis of the way in which children,

teachers, parents, and others from the community work together in the Maury School in Richmond, Virginia.

While this is not a book about the teaching of reading, constant reference is made to the ways in which reading permeates the program. In Maury School, reading is a vital part of life and as such pervades every area of school living.

Teachers there do not try to hurry the growth of children, nor do they attempt to measure it objectively day by day. They have found that as children gain self-confidence, as they find a place for themselves, they learn many skills very quickly.

Books, stories, and reading are vitally important in the program of Maury. In many kinds of situations, teachers do all they can "to open new worlds of communication" so that children can better understand themselves and others. The teachers have found that children go voluntarily to books because they either enjoy the beauty of expression or find information which they want.

Throughout the book, emphasis is placed on the idea that only as reading has meaning in their own lives, will children be able to use it effectively. For the children in Maury School, learning to read is a personal matter and each one is given individual help of the kind he needs at the time he needs it.

For the experienced teacher this book should serve as inspiration to examine the quality of living in her own classroom and renew her efforts at expanding children's worlds. The beginning teacher will thrill to the concept of education presented and at

the same time receive practical help in planning for and with children. All who have enjoyed helping children "find themselves" will be pleased with the sensitivity to feeling tone and to inter-personal relationships shown by Miss Nesbitt. It is a timely report, artistically made.

Lucile Lindberg
Department of Education
Queens College, New York City

MARGARET LINDSAY AND OTHERS.
The Three R's in the Elementary School. Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development, Washington, 1952. 152 pp.

There is little disagreement among educators and lay members of the community concerning the great need for competence in the Three R's in order to live effectively in the present-day world. There is frequently some difference of opinion, however, as to what constitutes such competence and how it is best achieved. In developing *The Three R's in the Elementary School*, the Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development has sought to present a point of view concerning this issue which would take into account the increased demands of our complex society and some accepted principles of child growth and learning. The bulletin, therefore, expresses an expanded concept of the Three R's in terms of today's needs and suggests a functional and more meaningful approach to the development of communication and number skills. While the content of this timely publication is concerned with various aspects of the language arts and also with arithmetic, much

of the discussion throughout the book bears directly upon the development of significant attitudes and skills in reading.

In preparing this bulletin, the committee selected for the responsibility has focused first upon the need for the Three R's and the importance of developing them in a total life setting. This introduction is followed by a statement of the principles of child growth upon which the thinking of the committee is based and by a discussion of conditions essential to effective learning. Chapter IV deals exclusively with the function, development, and organization of the reading program and with its interpretation to parents. Finally, the bulletin presents descriptions of two classroom situations in which reading, along with other basic skills may be viewed as an integral part of school living. In conclusion teachers are left with the challenge to bring their thinking to bear upon certain problems yet unsolved in the area of the Three R's.

There has been no attempt in this publication to deal comprehensively with the development of reading in the elementary school. Nevertheless, the committee has presented a clear and forward-looking statement of the understandings and procedures essential to an effective reading program. *The Three R's in the Elementary School* merits the attention and thoughtful consideration of all professional and lay persons who evidence concern for the development of reading competence.

Doris F. Holmes
Department of Education
Queens College, New York City

What Other Magazines Are Saying About the Teaching of Reading

*Reviewed by Muriel Potter
State Teachers College
Ypsilanti, Michigan*

(In each issue of the 1953-54 "Reading Teacher," Dr. Potter will review a group of recent magazine articles that have dealt with the teaching of reading. These reviews are presented as a guide to further exploration in the literature about the hows and whys of the teaching of reading.—Editor.)

Reading Retardation

Elementary English, Vol. 30, No. 1, January 1953, is devoted almost entirely to articles on reading and language. Among those especially recommended are: "A Visit with Remedial Teachers." C. DeWitt Boney. *Elementary English*, Vol. 30, No. 1, January 1953, and "A Success Story." Alma Wohlgemuth. *Elementary English*, Vol. 30, No. 1, January 1953.

These two articles, in the same issue of *Elementary English*, supplement each other. Dr. Boney surveyed an area in which 236 teachers are specially employed to teach remedial reading. He obtained statements from teachers, school administrators, and civic groups as to their opinions of the purposes and values of the remedial reading program in their schools. These opinions differ. In one school system, where the remedial teachers are also consultants for teachers who give additional help to retarded read-

ers in their own classrooms, and where remedial assistance is confined to the junior and senior high school level, the results are regarded as worthwhile. In areas where the community of parents and teachers see remedial reading instruction as a means of bringing school groups "up to grade" or as a way of avoiding the necessity for working with children of different levels of achievement and ability, a remedial program cannot satisfy these expectations. Dr. Boney concludes that perhaps too much emphasis is being given to reading itself, and that this over-emphasis is what has produced over-anxiety in parents, and unrealistic achievement goals.

Miss Wohlgemuth presents another side of the remedial program by means of a description of the gains made by a single child, severely retarded scholastically and not performing anywhere near the level of his admittedly mediocre ability. In the case of George, remedial teacher, classroom teacher, and principal worked together to give what might be called "moral support" as well as carefully planned reading experiences at a level where George could profit from and enjoy them. George's experience in learning both to read and to respect himself is not exceptional, in the experience of the reviewer. It

is the increasing number of such "success stories" in the records of the remedial reading program that makes it worth paying for.

* * *

"The Reading Status of Children Classified by Teachers as Retarded Readers." Ralph C. Preston. *Elementary English*, Vol. 30, No. 4, April 1953.

This article describes an investigation into the actual reading ability of a group of 82 children described by their teachers as retarded in reading. Since teachers are naturally influenced in their judgment of the degree of retardation of a child's reading by the general level of class achievement and by various other factors, the study attempted an objective appraisal of each child's retardation by computing his Reading Index (his reading grade divided by his mental grade) and setting up a Reading Index of .80 as the criterion of true retardation. This means that a child whose reading age was found by tests to be less than $4/5$ of his mental age score was considered a case of true reading retardation. Several statements are quoted from the body of the discussion as being especially significant for the thinking of teachers:

"... It will be noted that most of the bona fide cases of retardation were average in intelligence or above average. In contrast, 70% of the incorrectly teacher-classified pupils in School B were below average in intelligence. . . .

"The great majority of pupils (all of them in School A) who were apparently mistakenly called retarded by their teachers were lagging behind

grade norms of reading achievement. Indeed, the teachers acknowledged that reading achievement scores in relation to a child's school grade (and irrespective of his mental capacity) was an important criterion used by them in judging reading retardation. They also acknowledged that a child who has difficulty in reading material prepared for his grade level (and irrespective of his mental capacity) was usually classified by them as retarded. . . ."

The conclusions of this interesting study are quoted in full.

"1. Teachers in the two schools studied exhibited a tendency to classify more children as retarded readers than is justified in light of the children's mental capacities. The estimate of each teacher was considerably higher than an estimate based on the Reading Index.

"2. The percentage of overestimation of reading retardation was considerably higher in the primary grades than in the intermediate grades.

"3. Some teachers, while exaggerating the incidence of retardation, also regarded certain actually retarded readers as normal readers.

"4. The teachers were inclined to consider failure to read material prepared for the grade in question and failure to achieve up-to-grade scores on standardized tests as constituting retardation, irrespective of a child's mental capacity.

"5. Some of the teachers were inclined to consider skill in oral reading a better criterion of reading normality than skill in silent reading.

"6. There is doubtless a need in many schools for greater considera-

tion of the fact that lagging readers' mental ability is a more reasonable standard for judging reading retardation than a child's ability or inability to read material prepared for the grade in which he is placed. While a child's mental age may be a low estimate of his ability, its use will save many a child from the damaging effects of unrealistically high expectations with the ensuing pressures, frustrations, and needless sense of failure."

I would add that teachers might learn to judge reading retardation more realistically if good estimates of mental age were generally available to them, and could be correctly interpreted to them. The tests used in this investigation for estimating mental age were, in one school, the Kuhlmann-Anderson Intelligence Tests, and in the other, the non-language portion of the California Test of Mental Maturity. The greatest number of children actually retarded (according to the Reading Index), was found in the average intelligence and dull normal group in School A, and in the average and superior groups in School B. The teachers tended to classify as retarded readers those children whose low mental capacity was attended by relatively lower reading achievement, but whose performance was up to the level of that mental capacity.

Methods and Skills

"Reading for Problem-Solving in Science." J. Harlan Shores and J. L. Saupe. *Journal of Educational Psychology*, Vol. 44, No. 3, March 1953.

The authors describe an investiga-

tion, at the middle-grades level, in which a specially constructed test for problem-solving in science was administered as one of a battery including language and non-language intelligence tests, and standardized tests in reading and arithmetic. They concluded that a general ability influences all the scores on the tests, including the test of problem-solving in science, shown by positive correlations among all the scores of the tests administered. From their findings the authors suggest that the significant development of the ability to solve problems in science requires deliberately planned learning situations. This is a direct challenge to us to do more in the teaching of reading for problem-solving.

* * *

"Measuring the Map-reading Ability of Sixth-Grade Children." Louise Durkee Wagner. *Elementary School Journal*, LIII, No. 6, February 1953.

This article provides a list of the skills and knowledge required in map-reading, made by the investigator in the course of constructing a test at the sixth grade level. The list is enlightening in that it suggests the necessity for a wide background of concepts and information, and thus provides an analysis of the problem of teaching geography. Surprisingly, the large group of children tested could use their knowledge of the globe to recognize distortions in flat maps, although they were relatively weak in the interpretation of latitude and longitude information, and were confused by the way in which questions on direction were phrased. The danger of confusing *north* with *up* on the

map is stressed, together with the present-day necessity for being able to read maps without regard to their orientation on a page. The test disclosed a wide range of ability in map-reading. The investigator concludes . . . "the per cent attained here is a good score for sixth grade children since many of the skills measured by the test are not introduced until the sixth grade level and the study shows that the skills taught in lower grades received higher per cents of correct responses. Apparently, these skills become more useful and meaningful to children as they progress."

* * *

"What's Behind the Reading Score?"

Constance M. McCullough. *Elementary English*, Vol. 30, No. 1, January 1953.

This amusing and readable but very pertinent article points out the specific values to be found by analyzing each child's errors on a test, as opposed to the typical procedure of entering his total score on a record without careful scrutiny of his paper. The kind of analysis recommended provides new and meaningful goals and specific skill-building activities for each teacher in terms of the needs of her children. Highly recommended.

* * *

"Oral-Language Growth and Reading Ability." A. Sterl Artley. *Elementary School Journal*, Vol. LIII, No. 6, February 1953.

The thesis of this article is "A child can read no better than he can organize his ideas and express them." The writer reviews briefly the research from the field of reading readiness and early reading which supports

this statement. He points out that oral language and reading make up a single unitary process and that spelling, reading and listening comprehension, and oral and written expression are interrelated parts of language development, and reinforce one another. He names the following factors in oral-language development: developing awareness of oral words as language units; enriching oral vocabulary, strengthening meaning associations; formulating sentences; organizing ideas into language units; using narrative expression; improving articulation; developing sensitivity to inflectional variants; developing awareness of sentence structure.

This article is most helpful in reminding us of many aspects of oral language which require teaching, but which we too often take for granted.

* * *

"Phonic Study and Word Analysis—I." Paul Witty. *Elementary English*, Vol. 30, No. 5, May 1953.

This paper reviews briefly the manner in which phonics teaching has been part or all of reading instruction up until the 20th century, then summarizes the findings of research on the value of phonics in teaching read-

Most experimenters agree in finding that excessive amounts of phonics can be harmful rather than helpful in children's learning to read, and that they are harmful when introduced before the child has a mental age of seven years. Phonetic readiness is described, and detailed abstracts are made from the writings of A. J. Harris, William S. Gray, and Donald Durrell on the order in which pho-

netic skills should be introduced and the grades to which they are appropriate. Quotations from courses of study in reading in the Chicago, Minneapolis, and Cincinnati Schools and the New Mexico State Department of Education indicate that a middle-of-the-road policy — recognizing the value of phonics as a means of recognizing words independently, but stressing the fact that it is only one among a number of word recognition tools—is the point of view most generally recommended to teachers by both specialists and syllabi for developmental reading.

* * *

"First Grade Phonics in Texas Schools." Thelma Shaw Akins. *Elementary English*, Vol. 30, No. 5, May 1953.

This brief article summarizes the

results of a survey of the teaching of phonics in 36 first grades. The investigator found that although teachers were provided with five well-known and recently revised basal texts for reading which spaced phonics through the first year by means of their manuals, the teachers observed taught more advanced phonics and taught phonics more frequently than the manuals recommended. Calling attention to the fact that this teaching took place in the second half of first grade, where only half of the children will have reached a mental age of seven, the writer suggests that teachers are receiving from the manuals of the basal texts the recommendations based on research in phonics, and that until further research indicates a change is advisable, they "cannot go far wrong in following the phonetic practices recommended by their basal texts."

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I.C.I.R.I. Made Progress During 1952-53

As I REFLECT upon my year as president of I.C.I.R.I., I feel a warm glow of pleasure at the solid, healthy growth that has taken place. Among the many important events of the year, the following seem to me to have been outstanding: (1) *THE READING TEACHER* made an instant hit in its new printed format, gaining wide recognition for the high quality and practicality of its articles. (2) Many new councils were formed and began to operate, bringing classroom teachers as well as supervisors and reading specialists into active participation. For the first time, delegates from many locals took part in the annual meeting of the Assembly. (3) The new constitution, adopted a year ago, proved very satisfactory. (4) A direct and effective channel of communication between local councils and the central body was set up. (5) Incorporation as a non-profit educational organization was carried out in the State of Pennsylvania. (6) The rapidly growing membership provided expanding financial solidity, which was immediately channeled into improving *THE READING TEACHER* and providing more office help for the Executive Secretary-Treasurer. At the same time, it greatly increased the amount of clerical work, making the burden heavy even with more assistance. (7) The unselfish devotion of all members of the Board of Directors and committee chairmen was a tremendous asset and made the president's job an easy one.

Under our new president, Dr. Paul Witty, we can anticipate continuing expansion and increasing helpfulness to all members. The need for the kind of service I.C.I.R.I. provides has been amply proven. During the coming year, we may profitably study the question of closer cooperation with other organizations that are interested in reading problems.

Albert J. Harris
Past President, I.C.I.R.I.

A Message from the President

It is WITH pleasure that I take this opportunity to welcome new members to the International Council for the Improvement of Reading Instruction. Some of you may be examining *THE READING TEACHER* for the first time. Others may be old friends of this magazine. We hope all of you will enjoy the various issues, will share them with others, and will send your suggestions for improvement to us.

This magazine like the organization it represents, has one central aim—the improvement of instruction in reading. Improvement may be brought about, of course, in different ways and by varied approaches. One way involves the provision of opportunities for teachers to examine and discuss constructive efforts in the classroom. It is often difficult for

teachers to obtain this type of help since opportunities are rarely available for them to meet and *concentrate* their attention on this single important problem. And here precisely is the special and unique contribution that the I.C.I.R.I. is making. Local councils are now in operation throughout the United States and Canada in which the improvement of reading instruction is the *central* concern.

We hope that you who are not already members of local councils will join one. If there is no council in your area, it will be possible for you and a few of your friends to establish one easily. We believe you will be richly rewarded for this effort, for you will find that active participation in such a group will offer you opportunities to share your work and to discuss

your problem with interested persons. Sometimes the solution to pressing problems may be very near at hand. And you may find this solution through your council. Participation in the local council may not only make an important contribution to your work, but it may also provide for you the fellowship, reassurance, and high morale all teachers need.

As president of the International Council for the Improvement of Reading Instruction this year, I want to extend a hearty welcome to new members as well as greetings to old friends. I believe we shall find a high measure of satisfaction and enjoyment as we work confidently together to bring about improvement in reading instruction.

Paul Witty
President, I.C.I.R.I.

News of Local Reading Councils

Reports from local reading councils show a variety of activities that are proving worthwhile and stimulating to teachers of reading.

The Kingston, Ontario, Council is concentrating on interesting and constructive programs dealing with the immediate problems confronting their teachers. Demonstration lessons, followed by discussions, reports of summer courses attended, panel discussions, and a "buzz" session on Word Analysis have been features of the programs of the past and will be continued. Mr. A. McKinnon, Queens University, addressed the council on "A Study of Group Formation Related to Reading Progress."

Local Councils are urged to send news of their meetings and plans for the future to Miss Josephine Tronsberg, Reading Laboratory, University of Pittsburgh, Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, who is Local Council Editor.

The Greater Niagara Council, Ontario, reports a very successful year with well-attended, enthusiastic meetings. Last fall, the five remedial teachers gave short talks on topics such as

"Formal and Informal Testing" and "Reading Aids in the Senior Grades." In February, Dr. Walter Koerber spoke on "Teaching Reading to the Bottom Third of the Class." At the final meeting, "Reading Techniques" was the subject discussed.

The Toronto and District Council recently had the privilege of hearing several well-known authorities in the field of reading. Mrs. May Hill Arbuthnot discussed "Child Guidance Through Poetry," Dr. Paul Witty spoke on "The Education of the Gifted Child" and "The Developmental Reading Program," and Dr. J. C. Gainesburg reported on "Retarded Readers at High School Level" and "Improving Reading at the Intermediate Level." A question and answer period was conducted by Dr. A. Sterl Artley. At other meetings reports were made by delegates to the Reading Institute at Temple University. Lectures and demonstrations of classroom management at the primary, intermediate, and junior high school level were given.

The Westchester Reading Council of Westchester County, New York had its first large meeting in May. Two hundred were present to hear Dr. Albert J. Harris and Dr. William D. Sheldon. At the September meeting, the Council met in small groups according to such interest areas as the elementary level, the junior high school reader, the remedial program etc.

The Long Island Council, New York, has a research project in progress. Members are compiling a list of all reading courses which appear in college and university bulletins. For

the year 1953-54 they have planned to have Dr. William D. Sheldon as guest speaker at one meeting, a workshop at another meeting, and a demonstration at a third meeting.

The Somerset County Council, New Jersey, reports very enthusiastic meetings last year with a covered-dish supper the most popular. Reading procedure will be stressed in their county meetings this year. Their county superintendent once referred to their council as "the most professional group in the country."

Columbus Council, Columbus, Ohio, had eighteen charter members before launching a membership drive in September. At their first meeting this fall, a committee of teachers, who had been working for a year on remedial reading aids, presented these materials and aids.

The Kanawha Council, Kanawha County, Charleston, West Virginia, will devote their first meeting of the council to the teaching of reading at the high school level. A demonstration lesson on seventh-grade level will be followed by a discussion period.

The Appalachian Council, Boone, North Carolina, is cooperating on research for a doctoral dissertation on reading conducted at the Boone, North Carolina, Laboratory School. The research is concerned with developmental, environmental and experiential factors related to good and poor reading at the late primary level.

The Berks County Council, Pennsylvania, has planned demonstrations on reading readiness, informal reading inventories, and directed reading activities in addition to lectures by reading specialists.

The Lancaster County and City Council, Pennsylvania, includes members from the elementary, secondary, and college fields. Meetings will be held four times during the school term and their programs are being planned to meet the needs of the various members. Present plans include different types of meetings such as workshops, panel discussions, outside consultants and a social evening.

The Gerald A. Yoakam Council, Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, with 123 members has been very active this past year. The group conducted pa-

nel discussions on five television programs in response to questions on reading sent in by parents. During the annual Reading Conference at the University of Pittsburgh, the Council sponsored the luncheon at which Dr. Paul Witty discussed "Providing for the Reading Needs of Bright Children." A research project under the direction of Dr. Donald L. Cleland will be initiated in the fall to determine whether the Visual Recognition Chart of the American Optometric Association will differentiate a good reader from a poor reader.

Local Reading Councils and their Officers

California

SAN GABRIEL COUNCIL. *President*, Mrs. Mary Briggs, 1006 N. Bushnell, Alhambra. *Secretary*, Mary Manning, 9134 Huntington Dr., San Gabriel.

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Ave., Apt. 5, North Miami.

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KANAWHA COUNCIL. *President*, Mrs. Edith Stroud, 3608 Virginia Ave., S. E., Charleston. *Secretary*, Mrs. Adah Ruber, 715 Main St., Charleston.

New Local Reading Councils Are Being Formed

THE PERSONS listed below have requested information about forming local councils of the I.C.I.R.I. Others who are interested are asked to get in touch with the person in their area who is now considering formation of a council. Additional names of interested persons may be found listed in the May, 1953 issue on page 11.

Arizona, Mary Laird, 1334 E. Lynne Lane, Phoenix.

California, Ned Marksheffel, 1234 Delaware Ave., Santa Cruz.

Canada, Ruth Cairns, 330 Gilmour St., Ottawa, Ontario.

Florida, Lillian Armstrong, Supv. of Elementary Education, Ft. Myers.

Claire A. Rowe, 12124 N.E. 5th Ave., Apt. 5, North Miami.

Illinois, Ray C. Hawley, Court House, Ottawa.

Leona V. Heberlein, 518 S. Clifton, Park Ridge.

Iowa, Winnifred Hall, 407 N. Elm, Creston.

Massachusetts, Miriam McSweeney, 29 Lincoln St., Lynn.

Trevor Serviss, D. C. Heath and Co., 285 Columbus Ave., Boston 16.

New York, Alice C. DeLaney, 19 Kent Ave., Hastings on Hudson 7.

Beatrice George, 70 Scudder Ave., Northport.

Mary E. Hope, 5400 Fieldston Rd., New York 71.

Elaine Lynch, 14 Rockland, Haverstraw.

Pearl Moskowitz, c/o Sommer, 190 Waverly Pl., New York 14.

Eleanore A. Regan, J. H. S. 162, Willoughby and St. Nicholas Ave., Brooklyn 37.

Jack Vogel, 2166 Muliner Ave., New York 60.

Ohio, Rose Mary Kraus, 2935 Silver Lake Blvd., Cuyahoga Falls.

Pennsylvania, Margaret A. Fraser, Reading Clinic, University of Pennsylvania, 3810 Walnut St., Philadelphia 4.

Allan A. Glatthorn, Temple University, Philadelphia.

Jean L. Holcombe, 22 William St., Towanda.

Mrs. William F. Maney, Sr., 121 Montgomery Ave., Bala-Cynwyd.

George B. Swinehar, Supv. Prin., Boyertown School District, Boyertown.

Vermont, Rachel C. Chaffey, 5 Glen St., Brattleboro.

Washington, Alice Toffle, 506 N. 7 St., Pasco.

West Virginia, Lawrence Losh, Ass't. Supt., Preston County Schools, High St., Kingwood.

Wisconsin, Verna Mulry, 217 Wisconsin Ave., Waukesha.

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In Junior High: In our summer school for Junior High pupils this year we used the Phonovisual Method. The enthusiasm of the children was delightful and contagious. We were more than gratified at the improvement in reading and spelling.— Jane F. Hilder, Supervisor, The Reading Clinic, Washington, D. C., Public Schools.

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